LETTERS
ON
Several Subjects.

By the late
Sir THOMAS FITZOSBORNE, Bart.

To which is added,
(Tranſlated by the ſame Hand)
A Dialogue upon Oratory:
attributed to QUINCTILIAN.

VOL. II.

Jam ſatis eſt: ne me Criſpini ſcrinia lippi
Compilaſſe putes. ——— HOR.

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MVSEVM
BRITAN
NICVM

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Errors of the Press.

Page 5. Line 12, *for* contingeny, *read* contingency.
9. Line *ult.* *for* natural *read* external.
38. Line 13, *for* desert *read* desart.
68. Line 17. *for* deserts *read* desarts.
160. Line 7. *for* wtth *read* with.
177. Line 15. *for* of his Homer, imitations of Horace, *read* of Homer, and imitations of Horace.
210. Line 5. *for* an *read* and.
213. Line 6. *for* wander'd *read* wonder'd.
218. Line 6. *after* thine *dele the* Comma.
219. Line 3. *for* then *read* than.
263. Line 24. *after* theatres *add a* Comma.
267. Line 21. *after* of *insert* a.
296. Line 2, 3. *for* vehehemence *read* vehemence.

LETTERS
ON
SEVERAL SUBJECTS.

LETTER XLIV.

To CLYTANDER.

Sept. 1719.

I Entirely approve of your design: but whilst I rejoice in the hope of seeing enthusiasm thus successfully attacked in her strongest and most formidable holds, I would claim your mercy for her in another quarter; and after having expelled her from her religious dominions, let me intreat you to leave her in the undisturbed enjoyment of her civil possessions. To own the truth, I look

upon enthuſiaſm in all other points but that of religion, to be a very neceſſary turn of mind; as indeed it is a vein which nature ſeems to have marked with more or leſs ſtrength in the tempers of moſt men. No matter what the object is, whether buſineſs, pleaſures, or the fine arts; whoever purſues them to any purpoſe muſt do ſo *con amore*, and inamoratos, you know, of every kind, are all enthuſiaſts. There is indeed a certain heightening faculty which univerſally prevails thro' our ſpecies; and we are all of us, perhaps, in our ſeveral favourite purſuits, pretty much in the circumſtances of the renowned knight of La Mancha, when he attacked the barber's brazen baſon, for Mambrino's golden helmet.

WHAT is Tully's *aliquid immenſum infinitumque*, which he profeſſes to aſpire after in oratory, but a piece of true rhetorical Quixotiſm? Yet never, I will venture to affirm, would he have glowed with ſo much eloquence, had he been warmed with leſs enthuſiaſm. I am perſuaded

ſuaded indeed, that nothing great or glorious was ever performed, where this quality had not a principal concern; and as our paſſions add vigour to our actions, enthuſiaſm gives ſpirit to our paſſions. I might add too, that it even opens and enlarges our capacities. Accordingly I have been informed, that one of the great lights of the preſent age never ſits down to ſtudy, till he has raiſed his imagination by the power of muſick. For this purpoſe he has a band of inſtruments placed near his library, which play till he finds himſelf elevated to a proper height; upon which he gives a ſignal, and they inſtantly ceaſe.

But thoſe *high conceits* which are ſuggeſted by enthuſiaſm, contribute not only to the pleaſure and perfection of the fine arts, but to moſt other effects of our action and induſtry. To ſtrike this ſpirit therefore out of the human conſtitution, to reduce things to their preciſe philoſophical ſtandard, would be to check ſome of the main wheels of ſociety, and

to fix half the world in an uſeleſs apathy. For if enthuſiaſm did not add an imaginary value to moſt of the objects of our purſuit; if fancy did not give them their brighteſt colours, they would generally, perhaps, wear an appearance too contemptible to excite deſire:

Weary'd we ſhould lie down in death,
This cheat of life would take no more,
If you thought fame an empty breath,
I Phillis but a perjur'd whore. Prior.

In a word, this enthuſiaſm for which I am pleading, is a beneficent enchantreſs, who never exerts her magick but to our advantage, and only deals about her friendly ſpells in order to raiſe imaginary beauties, or to improve real ones. The worſt that can be ſaid of her is, that ſhe is a kind deceiver and an obliging flatterer. Let me conjure you then, good Clytander, not to break up her uſeful enchantments, which thus ſurround us on every ſide; but ſpare her harmleſs deceptions in mere charity to mankind. I am, &c.

LET-

LETTER XLV.

To PHILOTES.

Aug. 5. 1708.

I SHOULD not have ſuffered ſo long an interval to interrupt our correſpondence, if my expedition to Euphronius had not wholly employed me for theſe laſt ſix weeks. I had long promiſed to ſpend ſome time with him before he embarked with his regiment for Flanders; and as he is not one of thoſe Hudibraſtick heroes who chooſe to run away one day, that they may live to fight another; I was unwilling to truſt the opportunity of ſeeing him, to the very precarious contingeny of his return. The high enjoyments he leaves behind him, might indeed be a pledge to his friends that his caution would at leaſt be equal to his courage, if his notions of honour were leſs exquiſitely delicate. But he will undoubtedly act as if he had nothing to hazard; though at the ſame time, from the generous ſenſibi-

lity of his temper, he feels every thing that his family can ſuffer in their fears for his danger. I had an inſtance whilſt I was in his houſe, how much Euphronia's apprehenſions for his ſafety are ready to take alarm upon every occaſion. She called me one day into the gallery to look upon a picture which was juſt come out of the painter's hands; but the moment ſhe carried me up to it, ſhe burſt out into a flood of tears. It was drawn at the requeſt, and after a deſign of her father's, and is a performance which does great honour to the ingenious artiſt who executed it. Euphronius is repreſented under the character of Hector when he parts from Andromache, who is perſonated in the piece by Euphronia; as her ſiſter, who holds their little boy in her arms, is ſhadowed out under the figure of the beautiful nurſe with the young Aſtyanax.

I was ſo much pleaſed with the deſign in this uncommon family-piece, that I thought it deſerved particular mention; as I could wiſh it were to become a gene-

ral faſhion to have all pictures of the ſame kind executed in ſome ſuch manner. If inſtead of furniſhing a room with ſeparate portraits, a whole family were to be thus introduced into a ſingle piece, and repreſented under ſome intereſting hiſtorical ſubject, ſuitable to their rank and character; portraits, which are now ſo generally and ſo deſervedly deſpiſed, might become of real value to the publick. By this means hiſtory-painting would be encouraged amongſt us, and a ridiculous vanity turned to the improvement of one of the moſt inſtructive, as well as the moſt pleaſing, of the imitative arts. Thoſe who never contributed a ſingle benefit to their own age, nor will ever be mentioned in any after-one, might by this means employ their pride and their expence in a way, which might render them entertaining and uſeful both to the preſent and future times. It would require, indeed, great judgment and addreſs in the painter, to chooſe and recommend ſubjects proper to the various characters which would preſent themſelves to his pencil; and un-

doubtedly we ſhould ſee many enormous abſurdities committed, if this faſhion were univerſally to be followed. It would certainly, however, afford a glorious ſcope to genius; and probably ſupply us, in due time, with ſome productions which might be mentioned with thoſe of the moſt celebrated ſchools. I am perſuaded at leaſt, that great talents have been ſometimes loſt to this art, by being confined to the dull, tho' profitable, labour of ſenſeleſs portraits; as I ſhould not doubt, if the method I am ſpeaking of were to take effect, to ſee that very promiſing genius, who, in conſequence of your generous offices, is now forming his hand by the nobleſt models in Rome, prove a rival to thoſe great maſters whoſe works he is ſtudying.

It cannot, I think, be denied, that the prevailing fondneſs of having our perſons copied out for poſterity, is, in the preſent application of it, a moſt abſurd and uſeleſs vanity; as, in general, nothing affords a more ridiculous ſcene, than thoſe groteſque

teſque figures which uſually line the manſions of a man who is fond of diſplaying his canvas-anceſtry:

Good Heav'n! that ſots and knaves ſhould be ſo vain,
To wiſh their vile reſemblance may remain;
And ſtand recorded, at their own requeſt,
To future times a libel or a jeſt. Dryden.

You muſt by no means, however, imagine that I abſolutely condemn this lower application of one of the nobleſt arts. It has certainly a very juſt uſe, when employed in perpetuating the reſemblances of that part of our ſpecies, who have diſtinguiſhed themſelves in their reſpective generations. To be deſirous of an acquaintance with the perſons of thoſe who have recommended themſelves by their writings or their actions to our eſteem and applauſe, is a very natural and reaſonable curioſity. For myſelf, at leaſt, I have often found much ſatisfaction in contemplating a well-choſen collection of the portrait kind, and comparing the mind of a favourite character, as it was either expreſſed or concealed in its natural lineaments.

ments. There is ſomething likewiſe extremely animating in theſe lively repreſentations of celebrated merit; and it was an obſervation of one of the Scipio's, that he could never view the figures of his anceſtors without finding his boſom glow with the moſt ardent paſſion of imitating their deeds. However, as the days of exemplary virtue are now no more, and we are not, many of us, diſpoſed to tranſmit the moſt inflaming models to future times; it would be but prudence, methinks, if we are reſolved to make poſterity acquainted with the perſons of the preſent age, that it ſhould be by viewing them in the actions of the paſt. Adieu. I am, &c.

LETTER XLVI.

To PALAMEDES.

July 4, 1719.

NOTWITHSTANDING the fine things you alledge in favour of the Romans, I do not yet find myſelf diſpoſed to become a convert to your opinion: on the contrary, I am ſtill obſtinate enough to maintain that the fame of your admired nation is more dazzling than ſolid, and owing rather to thoſe falſe prejudices which we are early taught to conceive of them, than to their real and intrinſick merit. If conqueſt indeed be the genuine glory of a ſtate, and extenſive dominions the moſt infallible teſt of national virtue; it muſt be acknowledged that no people in all hiſtory have ſo juſt a demand of our admiration as the Romans. But if we take an impartial view of this celebrated nation, perhaps much of our applauſe may abate. When we contemplate them, for inſtance, within their own walls, what do

we

we ſee but the dangerous convulſions of an ill-regulated policy?-as we can ſeldom, I believe, conſider them with reſpect to foreign kingdoms, without the utmoſt abhorrence and indignation.

But there is nothing which places theſe ſons of Romulus lower in my eſtimation, than their unmanly conduct in the article of their triumphs. I muſt confeſs, at the ſame time, that they had the ſanction of a god to juſtify them in this practice. Bacchus, or (as Sir Iſaac Newton has proved) the Egyptian Seſoſtris, after his return from his Indian conqueſts, gave the firſt inſtance of this ungenerous ceremony. But though his divinity was confeſſed in many other parts of the world; his example does not ſeem to have been followed till we find it copied out in all its inſolent pomp at Rome.

It is impoſſible to read the deſcriptions of theſe arrogant exhibitions of proſperity, and not be ſtruck with indignation at this barbarous method of inſulting

ing the calamities of the unfortunate. One would be apt, at the firſt glance, to ſuſpect that every ſentiment of humanity muſt be extinguiſhed in a people, who could behold with pleaſure the moving inſtances, which theſe ſolemnities afforded, of the caprice of fortune, and could ſee the higheſt potentates of the earth dragged from their thrones, to fill up the proud parade of theſe ungenerous triumphs. But the prevailing maxim which ran thro' the whole ſyſtem of Roman politicks was, to encourage a ſpirit of conqueſt; and theſe honours were evidently calculated to awaken that unjuſt principle of miſtaken patriotiſm. Accordingly by the fundamental laws of Rome, no general was entitled to a triumph, unleſs he had added ſome new acquiſition to her poſſeſſions. To ſuppreſs a civil inſurrection, however dangerous; to recover any former member of her dominions, however important; gave no claim to this ſupreme mark of ambitious diſtinction. For it was their notion, it ſeems, (and Valerius Maximus is my authority for ſaying

ing

ing ſo) that there is as much difference between adding to the territories of a commonwealth, and reſtoring thoſe it has loſt, as between the actual conferring of a benefit, and the mere repelling of an injury. It was but of a piece, indeed, that a ceremony conducted in defiance of humanity, ſhould be founded in contempt of juſtice; and it was natural enough that they ſhould gain by oppreſſion, what they were to enjoy by inſult.

If we conſider Paulus Æmilius after his conqueſt of Macedonia, making his publick entry into Rome, attended by the unfortunate Perſeus and his infant family; and at the ſame time reflect upon our Black Prince when he paſſed thro' London with his royal captive, after the glorious battle of Poictiers; we cannot fail of having the proper ſentiments of a Roman triumph. What generous mind who ſaw the Roman conſul in all the giddy exaltation of unfeeling pride, but would rather (as to that ſingle circumſtance) have been the degraded Perſeus

than

than the triumphant Æmilius? There is ſomething indeed in diſtreſs that reflects a ſort of merit upon every object which is ſo ſituated, and turns off our attention from thoſe blemiſhes that ſtain even the moſt vitious characters. Accordingly in the inſtance of which I am ſpeaking, the perfidious monarch was overlooked in the ſuffering Perſeus; and a ſpectacle ſo affecting checked the joy of conqueſt even in a Roman breaſt. For Plutarch aſſures us, when that worthleſs, but unhappy, prince was obſerved, together with his two ſons and a daughter, marching amidſt the train of priſoners; nature was too hard for cuſtom, and many of the ſpectators melted into a flood of tears. But with what a generous tenderneſs did the Britiſh hero conduct himſelf upon an occaſion of the ſame kind? He employed all the artful addreſs of the moſt refined humanity to conceal from his unhappy priſoner every thing that could remind him of his diſgrace; and the whole pomp that was diſplayed upon this occaſion, appeared ſingly as intended to lighten

the weight of his misfortunes, and to do honour to the vanquiſhed monarch.

You will remember, Palamedes, I am only conſidering the Romans in a political view, and ſpeaking of them merely in their national character. As to individuals, you know, I pay the higheſt veneration to many that roſe up amongſt them. It would not indeed be juſt to involve particulars, in general reflections of any kind: and I cannot but acknowledge ere I cloſe my letter, that though, in the article I have been mentioning, the Romans certainly acted a moſt unworthy part towards their publick enemies, yet they ſeem to have maintained the moſt exalted notions of conduct with reſpect to their private ones. That noble (and may I not add, that Chriſtian) ſentiment of Juvenal,

——— *Minuit*
Semper et infirmi eſt animi exiguique voluptas,
Ultio ———

was not merely the refined precept of their more improved philoſophers, but a general and popular maxim among them; and that

that generous ſentiment ſo much and ſo deſervedly admired in the Roman orator; *Non pœnitet me mortales inimicitias, ſempiternas amicitias habere*, was, as appears from Livy, ſo univerſally received as to become even a proverbial expreſſion. Thus Saluſt likewiſe, I remember, ſpeaking of the virtues of the antient Romans, mentions it as their principal characteriſtick, that upon all occaſions they ſhewed a diſpoſition rather to forgive than revenge an injury. But the falſe notions they had embraced concerning the glory of their country, taught them to ſubdue every affection of humanity, and extinguiſh every dictate of juſtice which oppoſed that deſtructive principle. It was this ſpirit, however, in return and by a very juſt conſequence, that proved at length the means of their total deſtruction. Farewell. I am, &c.

LETTER XLVII.

To ORONTES.

March 10, 1726.

THERE is nothing, perhaps, wherein mankind are more frequently miſtaken, than in the judgments which they paſs on each other. The ſtronger lines, indeed, in every man's character, muſt always be marked too clearly and diſtinctly to deceive even the moſt careleſs obſerver; and no one, I am perſuaded, was ever eſteemed in the general opinion of the world as highly deficient in his moral or intellectual qualities, who did not juſtly merit his reputation. But I ſpeak only of thoſe more nice and delicate traits which diſtinguiſh the ſeveral degrees of probity and good-ſenſe, and aſcertain the quantum (if I may ſo expreſs it) of human merit. The powers of the ſoul are ſo often concealed by modeſty, diffidence, timidity, and a thouſand other accidental affections; and the true com-

plexion of her moral operations depends ſo entirely on thoſe internal principles from whence they proceed; that thoſe who form their notions of others by caſual and diſtant views, muſt unavoidably be led into very erroneous judgments. Even Orontes, with all his candour and penetration, is not, I perceive, entirely ſecure from miſtakes of this ſort; and the ſentiments you expreſſed in your laſt letter concerning Varus, are by no means agreeable to the truth of his character.

It muſt be acknowledged at the ſame time, that Varus is an exception to all general rules: neither his head nor his heart are exactly to be diſcovered by thoſe indexes, which are uſually ſuppoſed to point directly to the genius and temper of other men. Thus with a memory that will ſcarce ſerve him for the common purpoſes of life, with an imagination even more ſlow than his memory, and with an attention that could not carry him thro' the eaſieſt propoſition in Euclid; he has a ſound and excellent underſtanding

joined to a refined and exquiſite taſte. But the rectitude of his ſentiments ſeems to ariſe leſs from reflection than ſenſation; rather from certain ſuitable feelings which the objects that preſent themſelves to his conſideration inſtantly occaſion in his mind, than from the energy of any active faculties which he is capable of exerting for that purpoſe. His converſation is unentertaining: for tho' he talks a great deal, all that he utters is delivered with labour and heſitation. Not that his ideas are really dark and confuſed; but becauſe he is never contented to convey them in the firſt words that occur. Like the orator mentioned by Tully, *metuens ne vitioſum colligeret, etiam verum ſanguinem deperdebat*, he expreſſes himſelf ill by always endeavouring to expreſs himſelf better. His reading cannot ſo properly be ſaid to have rendered him knowing, as not ignorant: it has rather enlarged, than filled his mind.

His temper is as ſingular as his genius, and both equally miſtaken by thoſe who only

only know him a little. If you were to judge of him by his general appearance, you would believe him incapable of all the more delicate ſenſations: nevertheleſs, under a rough and boiſterous behaviour, he conceals a heart full of tenderneſs and humanity. He has a ſenſibility of nature indeed beyond what I ever obſerved in any other man; and I have often ſeen him affected by thoſe little circumſtances, which would make no impreſſion on a mind of leſs exquiſite feelings. This extreme ſenſibility in his temper influences his ſpeculations as well as his actions, and he hovers between various hypotheſes without ſettling upon any, by giving importance to thoſe minuter difficulties which would not be ſtrong enough to ſuſpend a more active and vigorous mind. In a word, Varus is in the number of thoſe whom it is impoſſible not to admire or not to deſpiſe; and at the ſame time that he is the eſteem of all his friends, he is the contempt of all his acquaintance. Adieu. I am, &c.

LETTER XLVIII.

To CLYTANDER.

July 2, 1716.

YOU muſt have been greatly diſtreſſed indeed, Clytander, when you thought of calling me in as your auxiliary, in the debate you mention. Or was it not rather a motive of generoſity which ſuggeſted that deſign? and you were willing, perhaps, I ſhould ſhare the glory of a victory which you had already ſecured. Whatever *your* intention was, *mine* is always to comply with your requeſts; and I very readily enter the liſts, when I am at once to combat in the cauſe of truth and on the ſide of my friend.

IT is not neceſſary, I think, in order to eſtabliſh the credibility of a particular providence, to deduce it (as your objector, I find, ſeems to require) from known and undiſputed facts. I ſhould be exceedingly

cautious

cautious in pointing out any ſuppoſed inſtances of that kind; as thoſe who are fond of indulging themſelves in determining the preciſe caſes wherein they imagine the immediate interpoſition of providence is diſcoverable, often run into the weakeſt and moſt injurious ſuperſtitions. It is impoſſible indeed, unleſs we were capable of looking thro' the whole chain of things and viewing each effect in its remote connections and final iſſues, to pronounce of any contingency, that it is abſolutely and in its ultimate tendencies either good or bad. *That* can only be known by the great author of nature, who comprehends the full extent of our total exiſtence, and underſtands the influence which every particular circumſtance will have in the general ſum of our happineſs. But tho' the peculiar points of divine interpoſition are thus neceſſarily, and from the natural imperfection of our diſcerning faculties, extremely dubious; yet it can by no means from thence be juſtly inferred, that the doctrine of a particular providence is either groundleſs or abſurd: the general

principle may be true, though the application of it to any given purpoſe be involved in very inextricable difficulties.

THE notion that the material world is governed by general mechanical laws, has induced your friend to argue, that "it "is probable the Deity ſhould act by the "ſame rule of conduct in the intellectual; "and leave moral agents entirely to thoſe "conſequences which neceſſarily reſult "from the particular exerciſe of their origi-"nal powers." But this hypotheſis takes a queſtion for granted, which requires much proof before it can be admitted. The grand principle which preſerves this ſyſtem of the univerſe in all its harmonious order, is gravity, or that property by which all the particles of matter mutually tend to each other. Now this is a power which, it is acknowledged, does not eſſentially reſide in matter, but muſt be ultimately derived from the action of ſome immaterial cauſe. Why therefore may it not reaſonably be ſuppoſed to be the effect of the divine agency, immediately and conſtantly operating for the preſervation of this

wonderful

wonderful machine of nature? Certain, at leaſt, it is, that the explication which Sir Iſaac Newton has endeavoured to give of this wonderful phenomenon, by means of his ſubtil ether, has not afforded univerſal ſatisfaction: and it is the opinion of a very great writer, who ſeems to have gone far into enquiries of this abſtruſe kind, that the numberleſs effects of this power are inexplicable upon mechanical principles, or in any other way than by having recourſe to a ſpiritual agent, who connects, moves, and diſpoſes all things according to ſuch methods as beſt comport with his incomprehenſible purpoſes.

But ſucceſsful villainy and oppreſſed virtue are deemed, I perceive, in the account of your friend, as powerful inſtances to prove, that the ſupreme being remains an uninterpoſing ſpectator of what is tranſacted upon this theatre of the world. However, ere this argument can have a determining weight, it muſt be proved (which yet, ſurely, never can be proved) that proſperous iniquity has all thoſe advantages

vantages in reality, which it may ſeem to have in appearance; and that thoſe accidents which are uſually eſteemed as calamities, do in truth, and in the juſt ſcale of things, deſerve to be diſtinguiſhed by that appellation. It is a noble ſaying of the philoſopher cited by Seneca, "that "there cannot be a more unhappy man in "the world, than he who has never ex-"perienced adverſity." There is nothing perhaps in which mankind are more apt to make falſe calculations than in the article both of their own happineſs and that of others; as there are few, I believe, who have lived any time in the world, but have found frequent occaſions to ſay with the poor hunted ſtag in the fable, who was entangled by thoſe horns he had but juſt before been admiring;

O me infelicem! qui nunc demum intelligo,
Ut illa mihi profuerint quæ deſpexeram,
Et quæ laudaram quantum luctus habuerint!
Phæd.

If we look back upon the ſentiments of paſt ages, we ſhall find, the opinion for which

which I am contending has prevailed from the remoteſt account of time. It muſt undoubtedly have entered the world as early as religion herſelf; ſince all inſtitutions of that kind muſt neceſſarily be founded upon the ſuppoſition of a particular providence. It appears indeed to have been the favourite doctrine of ſome of the moſt diſtinguiſhed names in antiquity. Xenophon tells us, when Cyrus led out his army againſt the Aſſyrians, the word which he gave to his ſoldiers was, ΖΕΥΣ ΣΥΜΜΑΧΟΣ ΚΑΙ ΗΓΕΜΩΝ, "Jupiter the defender and conducter:" and he repreſents that prince as attributing ſucceſs even in the ſports of the field, to divine providence. Thus likewiſe, Timoleon (as the author of his life aſſures us) believed every action of mankind to be under the immediate influence of the Gods; and Livy remarks of the firſt Scipio Africanus, that he never undertook any important affair, either of private or publick concern, without going to the capitol in order to implore the aſſiſtance of Jupiter. Balbus the Stoick, in the dialogue

logue on the nature of the gods, expreſſly declares for a particular providence; and Cicero himſelf, in one of his orations, imputes that ſuperior glory which attended the Roman nation, ſingly to this animating perſuaſion. But none of the antients ſeem to have had a ſtronger impreſſion of this truth upon their minds, than the immortal Homer. Every page in the works of that divine poet, will furniſh proofs of this obſervation. I cannot however forbear mentioning one or two remarkable inſtances, which juſt now occur to me. When the Grecian chiefs caſt lots which of them ſhould accept the challenge of Hector, the poet deſcribes the army as lifting up their eyes and hands to heaven, and imploring the gods that they would direct the lot to fall on one of their moſt diſtinguiſhed heroes:

— Λαοι — θεοισι δε χειρας ανεσκον,
Ωδε τις ειπεσκεν, ιδων εις ουρανον ευρυν·
Ζευ πατερ, η Αιαντα λαχειν, η Τυδεος υιον,
Η αυτον βασιληα πολυχρυσοιο Μυκηνης [a].

[a] *The people pray with lifted eyes and hands,*
And vows like theſe aſcend from all the bands:

ſo

ſo likewiſe Antenor propoſes to the Trojans the reſtitution of Helen, as having no hopes, he tells them, that any thing would ſucceed with them after they had broken the faith of treaties:

——— νυν ορκια πιϛα
Ψευσαμενοι μαχομεϑα· τω ȣ νυ τι κερδιον ημιν
Ελπομαι εκτελεεϑαι [b].

And indeed Homer hardly ever makes his heroes ſucceed (as his excellent tranſlator juſtly obſerves) unleſs they have firſt offered a prayer to heaven. " He is " perpetually, ſays Mr. Pope, acknow- " ledging the hand of God in all events, " and aſcribing to that alone all the vic- " tories, triumphs, rewards, or puniſh- " ments of men. The grand moral laid " down at the entrance of his poem, " Διος δ' ετελειετο βȣλη, *The will of God* " *was fulfilled*, runs through his whole

[a] *Grant, thou Almighty, in whoſe hand is fate,*
A worthy champion for the Grecian ſtate:
This taſk let Ajax or Tydides prove,
Or he, the king of kings, belov'd of Jove. POPE.

[b] *The ties of faith, the ſworn alliance broke,*
Our impious battles, the juſt Gods provoke. POPE.

work,

"work, and is with a moſt remarkable "care and conduct, put into the mouths "of his greateſt and wiſeſt perſons on "every occaſion."

Upon the whole, Clytander, we may ſafely aſſert, that the belief of a particular providence is founded upon ſuch probable reaſons as may well juſtify our aſſent. It would ſcarce therefore be wiſe to renounce an opinion, which affords ſo firm a ſupport to the ſoul in thoſe ſeaſons wherein ſhe ſtands moſt in need of aſſiſtance, merely becauſe it is not poſſible, in queſtions of this kind, to ſolve every difficulty which attends them. If it be highly conſonant to our general notions of the benevolence of the Deity (as highly conſonant it ſurely is) that he ſhould not leave ſo impotent a creature as man, to the ſingle guidance of his own precarious faculties; who would abandon a belief ſo full of the moſt enlivening conſolation, in compliance with thoſe metaphyſical reaſonings which are uſually calculated rather to ſilence than to ſatisfy an

humble

humble enquirer after truth? Who indeed would wish to be convinced, that he ſtands unguarded by that heavenly ſhield, which can protect him againſt all the aſſaults of an injurious and malevolent world? The truth is, the belief of a particular providence is the moſt animating perſuaſion that the mind of man can embrace: it gives ſtrength to our hopes, and firmneſs to our reſolutions; it ſubdues the inſolence of proſperity, and draws out the ſting of affliction. In a word, it is like the golden branch to which Virgil's hero was directed, and affords the only ſecure paſſport thro' the regions of darkneſs and ſorrow. I am, &c.

LET-

LETTER XLIX.

To HORTENSIUS.

Aug. 12, 1712.

IF any thing could tempt me to read the Latin poem you mention, it would be your recommendation. But ſhall I venture to own, that I have no taſte for modern compoſitions of that kind? There is one prejudice which always remains with me againſt them, and which I have never yet found cauſe to renounce: no true genius, I am perſuaded, would ſubmit to write any conſiderable poem in a dead language. A poet who glows with the genuine fire of a warm and lively imagination, will find the copiouſneſs of his own native Engliſh ſcarce ſufficient to convey his ideas in all their ſtrength and energy. The moſt comprehenſive language ſinks under the weight of great conceptions; and a pregnant imagination diſdains to ſtint the natural growth of her thoughts to the confined ſtandard of claſſical expreſſion. An ordinary genius indeed

indeed, may be humbly contented to purſue words thro' indexes and dictionaries, and tamely borrow phraſes from Horace and Virgil; but could the elevated invention of Milton, or the brilliant ſenſe of Pope, have ingloriouſly ſubmitted to lower the force and majeſty of the moſt exalted and nervous ſentiments, to the ſcanty meaſure of the Roman dialect? For copiouſneſs is by no means in the number of thoſe advantages which attend the Latin language; as many of the antients have both confeſſed and lamented. Thus Lucretius and Seneca complain of its deficiency with reſpect to ſubjects of philoſophy; as Pliny the younger owns he found it incapable of furniſhing him with proper terms, in compoſitions of wit and humour. But if the Romans themſelves found their language thus penurious, in its entire and moſt ample ſupplies; how much more contracted muſt it be to us, who are only in poſſeſſion of its broken and ſcattered remains?

To ſay truth, I have obſerved in moſt of the modern Latin poems which I have accidentally run over, a remarkable barrenneſs of ſentiment, and have generally found the poet degraded into the parodiſt. It is uſually the little dealers on Parnaſſus, who have not a ſufficient ſtock of genius to launch out into a more enlarged commerce with the Muſes, that hawk about theſe claſſical gleanings. The ſtyle of theſe performances always puts me in mind of Harlequin's ſnuff, which he collected by borrowing a pinch out of every man's box he could meet, and then retailed it to his cuſtomers under the pompous title of *tabac de mille fleurs*. Half a line from Virgil or Lucretius, pieced out with a bit from Horace or Juvenal, is generally the motley mixture which enters into compoſitions of this ſort. One may apply to theſe jack-daw poets with their ſtolen feathers, what Martial ſays to a contemporary plagiariſt:

Stat contra dicitque tibi tua pagina, Fur es.

THIS kind of theft indeed, every man muſt neceſſarily commit, who ſets up for a poet in a dead language. For to expreſs himſelf with propriety, he muſt not only be ſure that every *ſingle* word which he uſes, is authorized by the beſt writers; but he muſt not even venture to throw them out of that particular combination in which he finds them connected: otherwiſe he may run into the moſt barbarous ſoleciſms. To explain my meaning by an inſtance from modern language: the French words *arene* and *rive*, are both to be met with in their approved authors; and yet if a foreigner, unacquainted with the niceties of that language, ſhould take the liberty of bringing thoſe two words together as in the following verſe,

Sur la rive du fleuve amaſſant de l'arene;

he would be expoſed to the ridicule, not only of the criticks, but of the moſt ordinary mechanick in Paris. For the idiom of the French tongue will not admit of the expreſſion *ſur la rive du fleuve*, but requires the phraſe *ſur le bord de la rivi-*

ere; as they never ſay *amaſſer de l'arene*, but *du ſable*. The ſame obſervation may be extended to all languages whether living or dead. But as no reaſonings from analogy, can be of the leaſt force in determining the idiomatick proprieties of any language whatſoever; a modern Latin poet has no other method of being ſure of avoiding abſurdities of this kind, than to take whole phraſes as he finds them formed to his hands. Thus inſtead of accommodating his expreſſion to his ſentiment, (if any he ſhould have) he muſt neceſſarily bend his ſentiment to his expreſſion, as he is not at liberty to ſtrike out into that boldneſs of ſtyle, and thoſe unexpected combinations of words, which give ſuch grace and energy to the thoughts of every true genius. True genius indeed, is as much diſcovered by ſtyle, as by any other diſtinction; and every eminent writer, without indulging any unwarranted licences, has a language which he derives from himſelf, and which is peculiarly and literally his own.

I WOULD recommend therefore to theſe empty echoes of the antients, which owe their voice to the ruins of Rome, the advice of an old philoſopher to an affected orator of his times: *Vive moribus præteritis*, ſaid he, *loquere verbis præſentibus*. Let theſe poets form their conduct, if they pleaſe, by the manners of the antients; but if they would prove their genius, it muſt be by the language of the moderns. I would not however have you imagine, that I exclude all merit from a qualification of this kind. To be ſkilled in the mechaniſm of Latin verſe, is a talent, I confeſs, extremely worthy of a pædagogue; as it is an exerciſe of ſingular advantage to his pupils. Adieu. I am, &c.

LETTER L.

To AMASIA.

July 8, 1730.

IF good manners will not juſtify my long ſilence, policy at leaſt will: and you muſt confeſs, there is ſome prudence in not owning a debt one is incapable of paying. I have the mortification indeed to find myſelf engaged in a commerce, which I have not a ſufficient fund to ſupport; though I muſt add at the ſame time, if you expect an equal return of entertainment for that which your letters afford, I know not where you will find a correſpondent. You will ſcarcely at leaſt look for him in the deſert, or hope for any thing very lively from a man who is obliged to ſeek his companions among the dead. You who dwell in a land flowing with mirth and good humour, meet with many a gallant occurrence worthy of record: But what can a village produce, which

which is more famous for repoſe than for action, and is ſo much behind the manners of the preſent age, as ſcarce to have got out of the ſimplicity of the firſt? The utmoſt of our humour riſes no higher than punch; and all that we know of Aſſemblies, is once a year round our may-pole. Thus unqualified, as I am, to contribute to your amuſement, I am as much at a loſs to ſupply my own; and am obliged to have recourſe to a thouſand ſtratagems to help me off with thoſe lingering hours, which run ſo ſwiftly, it ſeems, by you. As one cannot always, you know, be playing at puſh-pin, I ſometimes employ myſelf with a leſs philoſophical diverſion; and either purſue butter-flies or hunt rhymes, as the weather and the ſeaſons permit. This morning not proving very favourable to my ſports of the field, I contented myſelf with thoſe under covert; and as I am not at preſent ſupplied with any thing better for your entertainment, will you ſuffer me to ſet before you ſome of my game?

A TALE.

ERE Saturn's ſons were yet diſgrac'd,
And heathen gods were all the taſte,
Full oft (we read) 'twas Jove's high will
To take the air on Ida's hill.
It chanc'd, as once with ſerious ken,
He view'd from thence the ways of men,
He ſaw (and pity touch'd his breaſt)
The world by three foul fiends poſſeſt.
Pale *Diſcord* there, and *Folly* vain,
With haggard *Vice* upheld their reign.
Then forth he ſent his ſummons high,
And call'd a ſenate of the ſky.
Round as the winged orders preſt,
Jove thus his ſacred mind expreſt:
"Say, which of all this ſhining train
"Will *Virtue's* conflict hard ſuſtain?
"For ſee! ſhe drooping takes her flight,
"While not a god ſupports her right."
He paus'd——when from amidſt the ſky,
Wit, *Innocence*, and *Harmony*,
With one united zeal aroſe
The triple tyrants to oppoſe.
That inſtant from the realms of day,
With gen'rous ſpeed, they took their way:

To

To Britain's iſle direct their car,
And enter'd with the ev'ning ſtar.

BESIDE the road a manſion ſtood,
Defended by a circling wood.
Hither, diſguis'd, their ſteps they bend,
In hopes, perchance, to find a friend.
Nor vain their hope; for records ſay,
Worth ne'er from thence was turn'd away.
They urge the trav'ler's common chance,
And ev'ry piteous plea advance.
The artful tale that *Wit* had feign'd,
Admittance eaſy ſoon obtain'd.

THE dame who own'd, adorn'd the place;
Three blooming daughters added grace.
The firſt, with gentleſt manners bleſt
And temper ſweet, each heart poſſeſt;
Who view'd her, catch'd the tender flame:
And ſoft Amaſia was her name.
In ſprightly ſenſe and poliſh'd air,
What maid with Mira might compare?
While Lucia's eyes, and Lucia's lyre,
Did unreſiſted love inſpire.

IMAGINE now the table clear,
And mirth in ev'ry face appear:

The

The ſong, the tale, the jeſt went round,
The riddle dark, the trick profound.
Thus each admiring and admir'd,
The hoſts and gueſts at length retir'd;
When *Wit* thus ſpake her ſiſter-train:
" Faith, friends, our errand is but vain—
" Quick let us meaſure back the ſky;
" Theſe nymphs alone may well ſupply
" *Wit*, *Innocence*, and *Harmony*.

You ſee to what expedient ſolitude has reduced me, when I am thus forced to ſtring rhymes, as boys do birds-eggs, in order to while away my idle hours. But a gayer ſcene is, I truſt, approaching, and the day will ſhortly, I hope, arrive, when I ſhall only complain that it ſteals away too faſt. It is not from any improvement in the objects which ſurround me, that I expect this wondrous change; nor yet that a longer familiarity will render them more agreeable. It is from a promiſe I received, that Amaſia will viſit the hermit in his cell, and diſperſe the gloom of a ſolitaire by the chearfulneſs of her converſation. What inducements ſhall I mention to prevail with you to haſten that day?

day? ſhall I tell you, that I have a bower over-arched with jeſſamin? that I have an oak which is the favourite haunt of a dryad? that I have a plantation which flouriſhes with all the verdure of May, in the midſt of all the cold of December? Or, may I not hope that I have ſomething ſtill more prevailing with you than all theſe, as I can with truth aſſure you, that I have a heart which is faithfully yours, &c.

LETTER LI.

To ORONTES.

I WAS apprehenſive my laſt[a] had given you but too much occaſion of recollecting the remark of one of your admired antients, that "the art of elo-"quence is taught by man, but it is the "gods alone that inſpire the wiſdom of "ſilence." That wiſdom, however, you are not willing I ſhould yet practiſe; and you muſt needs, it ſeems, have my farther ſentiments upon the ſubject of oratory. Be it then as my friend requires; but let him remember, it is a hazardous thing to put ſome men upon talking on a favourite topick.

ONE of the moſt pleaſing exerciſes of the imagination, is that wherein ſhe is employed in comparing diſtinct ideas, and diſcovering their various reſemblances. There is no ſingle perception of the mind

[a] See Vol. I. LET. XXIV.

that

that is not capable of an infinite number of conſiderations in reference to other objects; and it is in the novelty and variety of theſe unexpected connections, that the richneſs of a writer's genius is chiefly diſplayed. A vigorous and lively fancy does not tamely confine itſelf to the idea which lies before it, but looks beyond the immediate object of its contemplation, and obſerves how it ſtands in conformity with numberleſs others. It is the prerogative of the human mind thus to bring its images together, and compare the ſeveral circumſtances of ſimilitude that attend them. By this means eloquence exerciſes a kind of magick power; ſhe can raiſe innumerable beauties from the moſt barren ſubjects, and give the grace of novelty to the moſt common. The imagination is thus kept awake by the moſt agreeable motion, and entertained with a thouſand different views both of art and nature, which ſtill terminate upon the principal object. For this reaſon I prefer the metaphor to the ſimile, as a far more pleaſing method of illuſtration. In the former,

mer, the action of the mind is leſs languid, as it is employed at one and the ſame inſtant in comparing the reſemblance with the idea it attends; whereas in the latter, its operations are more ſlow, being obliged to ſtand ſtill, as it were, in order to contemplate firſt the principal object, and then its correſponding image.

OF all the flowers, however, that embelliſh the regions of eloquence, there is none of a more tender and delicate nature; as there is nothing wherein a fine writer is ſo much diſtinguiſhed from one of an ordinary claſs, as in the conduct and application of this figure. He is at liberty indeed, to range through the whole compaſs of creation, and collect his images from every object that ſurrounds him. But though he may be thus amply furniſhed with materials, great judgment is required in chooſing them: for to render a metaphor perfect, it muſt not only be apt, but pleaſing; it muſt entertain, as well as enlighten. Mr. Dryden therefore can hardly eſcape the imputation of a very unpardonable breach of delicacy, when, in the dedi-

dedication of his Juvenal, he obſerves to the duke of Dorſet, that "ſome bad po-"ems carry their owners marks about "them—ſome brand or other on this "*buttock* or that *ear*, that it is notorious "who is the owner of the cattle." The poet Manilius ſeems to have raiſed an image of the ſame injudicious kind, in that compliment which he pays to Homer in the following verſes:

——*cujuſque ex ore profuſos*
Omnis poſteritas latices in carmine duxit.

I could never read theſe lines without calling to mind thoſe groteſque heads, which art fixed to the roof of the old building of King's college in Cambridge; which the ingenious architect has repreſented in the act of vomiting out the rain, which falls through certain pipes moſt judiciouſly ſtuck in their mouths for that purpoſe. Mr. Addiſon recommends a method of trying the propriety of a metaphor, by drawing it out in viſible repreſentation. Accordingly, I think this curious conceit of the builder might be employed

to

to the advantage of the youth in that univerſity, and ſerve for as proper an illuſtration of the abſurdity of the poet's image, as that antient picture which Ælian mentions, where Homer was figured with a ſtream running from his mouth, and a groupe of poets lapping it up at a diſtance.

But beſides a certain decorum which is requiſite to conſtitute a perfect metaphor, a writer of true taſte and genius will always ſingle out the moſt obvious images, and place them in the moſt unobſerved points of reſemblance. Accordingly, all alluſions which point to the more abſtruſe branches of the arts or ſciences, and with which none can be ſuppoſed to be acquainted but thoſe who have gone far into the deeper ſtudies, ſhould be carefully avoided, not only as pedantick, but impertinent; as they pervert the ſingle uſe of this figure, and add neither grace nor force to the idea they would elucidate. The moſt pleaſing metaphors therefore are thoſe which are derived from the more frequent occurrences of art or nature, or

the civil tranſactions and cuſtoms of mankind. Thus how expreſſive, yet at the ſame time how familiar, is that image which Otway has put into the mouth of Metellus, in his play of Caius Marius, where he calls Sulpitius

That mad wild bull whom Marius lets looſe
On each occaſion, when he'd make Rome
feel him,
To toſs our laws and liberties i'th' air.

BUT I never met with a more agreeable, or a more ſignificant alluſion, than one in Quintus Curtius, which is borrowed from the moſt ordinary object in common life. That author repreſents Craterus as diſſuading Alexander from continuing his Indian expedition, againſt enemies too contemptible, he tells him, for the glory of his arms, and concludes his ſpeech with the following beautiful thought: *Cito gloria obſoleſcit in ſordidis hoſtibus; nec quidquam indignius eſt quam* conſumi *eam ubi non poteſt* oſtendi. Now I am got into Latin quotations, I cannot forbear mentioning a moſt beautiful paſſage which I

lately had the pleaſure of reading, and which I will venture to produce as equal to any thing of the ſame kind, either in antient or modern compoſition. I met with it in the ſpeech of a young orator, to whom I have the happineſs to be related, and who will one day, I perſuade myſelf, prove as great an honour to his country, as he is at preſent to that learned ſociety of which he is a member. He is ſpeaking of the writings of a celebrated prelate, who received his education in that famous ſeminary to which he belongs, and illuſtrates the peculiar elegance which diſtinguiſhes all that author's performances, by the following juſt and pleaſing aſſemblage of diction and imagery: *In quodcunque opus ſe parabat, (& per omnia ſane verſatile illius ſe duxit ingenium) neſcio quâ luce ſibi ſoli propriâ, id illuminavit; haud diſſimili ei aureo Titiani radio, qui per totam tabulam gliſcens eam verè ſuam denunciat.* As there is nothing more entertaining to the imagination than the productions of the fine arts; there is no kind of ſimilitudes or metaphors which are in general more ſtrik-

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ing, than thoſe which allude to their properties and effects. It is with great judgment therefore that the ingenious author of the dialogue concerning the decline of eloquence among the Romans, recommends to his orator a general acquaintance with the whole circle of the polite arts. A knowledge of this ſort furniſhes an author with illuſtrations of the moſt agreeable kind, and ſets a gloſs upon his compoſitions that enlivens them with ſingular grace and ſpirit.

WERE I to point out the beauty and efficacy of metaphorical language, by particular inſtances, I ſhould rather draw my examples from the moderns than the antients; the latter being ſcarcely, I think, ſo exact and delicate in this article of compoſition, as the former. The great improvements indeed in natural knowledge which have been made in theſe later ages, has opened a vein of metaphor entirely unknown to the ancients, and enriched the fancy of modern wits with a new ſtock of the moſt pleaſing ideas: a cir-

cumſtance which muſt give them a very conſiderable advantage over the Greeks and Romans. I am ſure at leaſt of all the writings with which I have been converſant, the works of Mr. Addiſon will afford the moſt abundant ſupply of this kind, in all its variety and perfection. Truth and beauty of imagery is indeed his characteriſtical diſtinction, and the principal point of eminence which raiſes his ſtyle above that of every author in any language that has fallen within my notice. He is every where highly figurative; yet at the ſame time he is the moſt eaſy and perſpicuous writer I have ever peruſed. The reaſon is, his images are always taken from the moſt natural and familiar appearances; as they are choſen with the utmoſt delicacy and judgment. Suffer me only to mention one out of a thouſand I could name, as it appears to me the fineſt and moſt expreſſive that ever language conveyed. It is in one of his inimitable papers upon Paradiſe loſt, where he is taking notice of thoſe changes in nature which the author of that truly divine poem

poem deſcribes as immediately ſucceeding the fall. Among other prodigies, Milton repreſents the ſun in an eclipſe, and at the ſame time a bright cloud in the weſtern region of the heavens deſcending with a band of angels. Mr. Addiſon, in order to ſhew his author's art and judgment in the conduct and diſpoſition of this ſublime ſcenery, obſerves "the whole theatre of "Nature is *darkened*, that this glorious "*machine* may appear in all its luſtre and "magnificence." I know not, Orontes, whether you will agree in ſentiment with me; but I muſt confeſs I am at a loſs which to admire moſt upon this occaſion, the poet or the critick.

THERE is a double beauty in images of this kind when they are not only metaphors, but alluſions. I was much pleaſed with an inſtance of this uncommon ſpecies, in a little poem entitled *the ſpleen*. The author of that piece (who has thrown together more original thoughts than I ever read in the ſame compaſs of lines) ſpeaking of the advantages of exerciſe in

diſſipating thoſe gloomy vapours, which are ſo apt to hang upon ſome minds, employs the following image:

Throw but a ſtone, the giant dies.

You will obſerve, Orontes, that the metaphor here is conceived with great propriety of thought, if we conſider it only in its primary view; but when we ſee it pointing ſtill farther, and hinting at the ſtory of David and Goliath, it receives a very conſiderable improvement from this double application.

It muſt be owned, ſome of the greateſt authors, both antient and modern, have made many remarkable ſlips in the management of this figure, and have ſometimes expreſſed themſelves with as much impropriety as an honeſt ſailor of my acquaintance, a captain of a privateer, who wrote an account to his owners of an engagement, "in which he had the good fortune, he told them, of having only one of "his *hands* ſhot thro' the *noſe*." The great caution therefore ſhould be, never to join any idea to a figurative expreſſion, which would

would not be applicable to it in a literal ſenſe. Thus Cicero, in his treatiſe *de claris oratoribus*, ſpeaking of the family of the Scipios, is guilty of an impropriety of this kind: *O generoſam ſtirpem* (ſays he) *et tanquam in unam arborem plura genera, ſic in iſtam domum multorum inſitam atque* illuminatam *ſapientiam.* Mr. Addiſon, likewiſe, has fallen into an error of the ſame ſort, where he obſerves, "there "is not a ſingle view of human nature, "which is not ſufficient to *extinguiſh* the "*ſeeds* of pride." In this paſſage he evidently unites images together, which have no connection with each other. When a ſeed has loſt its power of vegetation, I might in a metaphorical ſenſe ſay it is *extinguiſhed:* but when in the ſame ſenſe I call that diſpoſition of the heart which produces pride, the *ſeed* of that paſſion, I cannot, without introducing a confuſion of ideas, apply any word to *ſeed*, but what correſponds with its real properties or circumſtances.

ANOTHER miſtake in the uſe of this figure is, when different images are crowded too cloſe upon each other, or (to expreſs myſelf after Quintilian) when a ſentence ſets out with ſtorms and tempeſts, and ends with fire and flames. A judicious reader will obſerve an impropriety of this kind in one of the late eſſays of the inimitable author laſt quoted, where he tells us, that "women were formed "to temper mankind, not to ſet an *edge* "upon their minds, and *blow* up in them "thoſe paſſions which are too apt to riſe "of their own accord." Thus a celebrated orator, ſpeaking of that little blackening ſpirit in mankind, which is fond of diſcovering ſpots in the brighteſt characters; remarks, that when perſons of this caſt of temper have mentioned any virtue in their neighbour, "it is well, if to "ballance the matter they do not clap "ſome fault into the oppoſite ſcale, that "ſo *the enemy may not go off with flying* "*colours*." Dr. Swift alſo, whoſe ſtyle is the moſt pure and ſimple of any of our claſſick writers, and who does not ſeem

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in general very fond of the figurative manner, is not always free from cenſure in his management of the metaphorical language. In his eſſay on the Diſſentions of Athens and Rome, ſpeaking of the populace, he takes notice, that "tho' in "their corrupt notions of divine worſhip, "they are apt to multiply their gods, yet "their earthly devotion is ſeldom paid to "above one *idol* at a time, whoſe *oar* they "pull with leſs murmuring and much "more ſkill, than when they ſhare the "*lading*, or even hold the *helm*." The moſt injudicious writer could not poſſibly have fallen into a more abſurd inconſiſtency of metaphor, than this eminent wit has inadvertently been betrayed into, in this paſſage. For what connection is there between worſhipping and *rowing*, and who ever heard before of pulling the *oar* of an idol?

As there are certain metaphors which are common to all languages; there are others of ſo delicate a nature as not to bear tranſplanting from one nation into another.

another. There is no part, therefore, of the buſineſs of a tranſlator more difficult to manage, than this figure; as it requires great judgment to diſtinguiſh when it may, and may not, be naturalized with propriety and elegance. The want of this neceſſary diſcernment has led the common race of tranſlators into great abſurdities, and is one of the principal reaſons that performances of this kind are generally ſo inſipid. What ſtrange work, for inſtance, would an injudicious interpreter make with the following metaphor in Homer?

Νυν γαρ παντεσσιν επι ξυρȣ ιςαται ακης.
IL. X. 173.

But Mr. Pope, by artfully dropping the particular image, yet retaining the general idea, has happily preſerved the ſpirit of his author, and at the ſame time humoured the different taſte of his own countrymen:

Each ſingle Greek in this concluſive ſtrife,
Stands on the ſharpeſt edge *of death or life.*

AND now, Orontes, do you not think it high time to be diſmiſſed from this fairy

fairy land? Permit me, however, juſt to add, that this figure which caſts ſo much light and beauty upon works of genius, ought to be entirely baniſhed from the ſeverer compoſitions of philoſophy. It is the buſineſs of the latter to ſeparate reſemblances, not to find them, and to deliver her diſcoveries in the plaineſt and moſt unornamented expreſſions. Much diſpute, and perhaps, many errors, might have been avoided, if metaphor had been thus confined within its proper limits, and never wandered from the regions of eloquence and poetry. I am, &c.

LET-

LETTER LII.

To PHIDIPPUS.

May 1, 1725.

IF that friend of yours, whom you are deſirous to add to the number of mine, were endued with no other quality than the laſt you mentioned in the catalogue of his virtues; I ſhould eſteem his acquaintance as one of my moſt valuable privileges. When you aſſured me, therefore, of the generoſity of his diſpoſition, I wanted no additional motive to embrace your propoſal of joining you and him at * *. To ſay truth, I conſider a generous mind as the nobleſt work of the creation, and am perſuaded, wherever it reſides, no real merit can be wanting. It is perhaps the moſt ſingular of all the moral endowments: I am ſure at leaſt, it is often imputed where it cannot juſtly be claimed. The meaneſt ſelf-love, under ſome refined diſguiſe, frequently paſſes upon common obſervers for this godlike principle; and I have known many a popular

pular action attributed to this motive, when it flowed from no higher a ſource than the ſuggeſtions of concealed vanity. Good-nature, as it has many features in common with this virtue, is uſually miſtaken for it: the former, however, is but the effect, poſſibly, of a happy diſpoſition of the animal ſtructure, or, as Dryden ſomewhere calls it, of a certain "milki-"neſs of blood:" whereas the latter is ſeated in the mind, and can never ſubſiſt where good ſenſe and enlarged ſentiments have no exiſtence. It is entirely founded indeed upon juſtneſs of thought: which perhaps is the reaſon this virtue is ſo little the characteriſtick of mankind in general. A man, whoſe mind is warped by by the ſelfiſh paſſions, or contracted by the narrow prejudices of ſects or parties, if he does not want honeſty, muſt undoubtedly want underſtanding. The ſame clouds that darken his intellectual views, obſtruct his moral ones; and his generoſity is extremely circumſcribed, becauſe his reaſoning is exceedingly limited.

IT is the diſtinguiſhing pre-eminence of the Chriſtian ſyſtem, that it cheriſhes this elevated principle in one of its nobleſt exertions. Forgiveneſs of injuries, I confeſs indeed, has been inculcated by ſeveral of the heathen moraliſts; but it never entered into the eſtabliſhed ordinances of any religion, till it had the ſanction of the great author of ours. I have often however wondered that the antients, who raiſed ſo many virtues and affections of the mind into divinities, ſhould never have given a place in their temples to generoſity; unleſs perhaps they included it under the notion of FIDES or HONOS. But ſurely ſhe might reaſonably have claimed a ſeparate altar, and ſuperior rites. A principle of honour may reſtrain a man from counter-acting the ſocial ties, who yet has nothing of that active flame of generoſity, which is too powerful to be confined within the humbler boundaries of mere negative duties. True generoſity riſes above the ordinary rules of ſocial conduct, and flows with much too full a ſtream to be comprehended within the

preciſe

preciſe marks of formal precepts. It is a vigorous principle in the ſoul, which opens and expands all her virtues far beyond thoſe which are only the forced and unnatural productions of a timid obedience. The man who is influenced ſingly by motives of the latter kind, aims no higher than at certain authoritative ſtandards; without ever attempting to reach thoſe glorious elevations, which conſtitute the only true heroiſm of the ſocial character. Religion without this ſovereign principle, degenerates into ſlaviſh fear, and wiſdom into a ſpecious cunning; learning is but the avarice of the mind, and wit its more pleaſing kind of madneſs. In a word, generoſity ſanctifies every paſſion, and adds grace to every acquiſition of the ſoul; and if it does not neceſſarily include, at leaſt it reflects a luſtre upon the whole circle of moral and intellectual qualities.

But I am running into a general panegyrick upon generoſity, when I only meant to acknowledge the particular inſtance you have given me of yours, in being

being desirous of communicating to me a treasure, which I know much better how to value than how to deserve. Be assured, therefore, though Euphronius had none of those polite accomplishments you enumerate, yet, after what you have informed me concerning his heart, I should esteem his friendship of more worth than all the learning of antient Greece, and all the *virtù* of modern Italy. I am, &c.

LET-

LETTER LIII.

To SAPPHO*.

March 10, 1731.

WHILE yet no am'rous youths around thee bow,
Nor flatt'ring verſe conveys the faithleſs vow;
To graver notes will Sappho's ſoul attend,
And ere ſhe hears the lover, hear the friend?

LET maids leſs bleſs'd employ their meaner arts
To reign proud tyrants o'er unnumber'd hearts;
May Sappho learn (for nobler triumphs born)
Thoſe little conqueſts of her ſex to ſcorn.
To form thy boſom to each gen'rous deed;
To plant thy mind with ev'ry uſeful ſeed;
Be theſe thy arts: nor ſpare the grateful toil
Where nature's hand has bleſs'd the happy ſoil.

* A young lady of thirteen years of age.

So ſhalt thou know, with pleaſing ſkill to blend
The lovely miſtreſs and inſtructive friend:
So ſhalt thou know, when unrelenting time
Shall ſpoil thoſe charms yet op'ning to their prime,
To eaſe the loſs of beauty's tranſient flow'r,
While reaſon keeps what rapture gave before.
And oh! whilſt wit, fair dawning, ſpreads its ray,
Serenely riſing to a glorious day,
To hail the growing luſtre oft be mine,
Thou early fav'rite of the ſacred Nine!

And ſhall the Muſe with blameleſs boaſt pretend,
In youth's gay bloom that Sappho call'd me friend:
That urg'd by me ſhe ſhun'd the dang'rous way,
Where heedleſs maids in endleſs error ſtray;
That ſcorning ſoon her ſex's idler art,
Fair praiſe inſpir'd and virtue warm'd her heart;

That

That fond to reach the diſtant paths of fame,
I taught her infant genius where to aim?
Thus when the feather'd choir firſt tempt the ſky,
And, all unſkill'd, their feeble pinions try,
Th' experienc'd ſire preſcribes th' advent'rous height,
Guides the young wing, and pleas'd attends the flight.

LETTER LIV.

To PALAMEDES.

July 1, 1708.

IF malice had never broke looſe upon the world, till it ſeized your reputation, I might reaſonably condole with you on falling the firſt prey to its unreſtrained rage. But this ſpectre has haunted merit almoſt from its earlieſt exiſtence; and when all mankind were as yet included within a ſingle family, one of them, we know, roſe up in malignity of ſoul againſt his innocent brother. Virtue, it ſhould ſeem therefore, has now been too long acquainted with this her conſtant perſecutor, to be either terrified or dejected at an appearance ſo common. The truth of it is, ſhe muſt either renounce her nobleſt theatre of action, and ſeclude herſelf in cells and deſerts, or be contented to enter upon the ſtage of the world with this fiend in her train. She cannot triumph, if ſhe will not be traduced; and ſhe ſhould conſider the clamours of cenſure

ſure, when joined with her own conſcious applauſe, as ſo many acclamations that confirm her victory.

Let thoſe who harbour this worſt of human diſpoſitions, conſider the many wretched and contemptible circumſtances which attend it: but it is the buſineſs of him who unjuſtly ſuffers from it, to reflect how it may be turned to his advantage. Remember then, my friend, that generoſity would loſe half her dignity, if malice did not contribute to her elevation; and he that has never been injured, has never had it in his power to exerciſe the nobleſt privilege of heroick virtue. There is another conſolation which may be derived from the rancour of the world, as it will inſtruct one in a piece of knowledge of the moſt ſingular benefit in our progreſs thro' it: It will teach us to diſtinguiſh genuine friendſhip from counterfeit. For he only who is warmed with the real flame of amity, will riſe up to ſupport his ſingle nega-

tive, in oppoſition to the clamorous votes of an undiſtinguiſhing multitude.

He, indeed, who can ſee a cool and deliberate injury done to his friend, without feeling himſelf wounded in his moſt ſenſible part; has never known the force of the moſt generous of all the human affections. Every man who has not taken the ſacred name of friendſhip in vain, will ſubſcribe to thoſe ſentiments which Homer puts into the mouth of Achilles, and which Mr. Pope has opened and enlarged with ſuch inimitable ſtrength and ſpirit:

A gen'rous friendſhip no cold medium knows,
Burns with one love, with one reſentment glows;
One ſhould our int'reſts and our paſſions be:
My friend muſt hate the man that injures me. IX. 609.

It may greatly alſo allay the pain which attends the wounds of defamation, and which are always moſt ſeverely felt by thoſe who leaſt deſerve them; to reflect, that though malice generally flings the firſt

firſt ſtone, it is folly and ignorance, it is indolence or irreſolution, which are principally concerned in ſwelling the heap. When the tide of cenſure runs ſtrongly againſt any particular character, the generality of mankind are too careleſs or too impotent to withſtand the current; and thus, without any particular malice in their own natures, are often indolently carried along with others, by tamely falling in with the general ſtream. The number of thoſe who really mean one harm, will wonderfully leſſen after the deductions which may fairly be made of this ſort; and the cup of unjuſt reproach muſt ſurely loſe much of its bitterneſs, where one is perſuaded that malevolence has the leaſt ſhare in mingling the draught. For nothing, perhaps, ſtings a generous mind more ſenſibly in wrongs of this ſort, than to conſider them as evidences of a general malignity in human nature. But from whatever cauſes theſe ſtorms may ariſe, virtue would not be true to her own native privileges, if ſhe ſuffered herſelf to

ſink under them. It is from that ſtrength and firmneſs which upright intentions will ever ſecure to an honeſt mind, that Palamedes, I am perſuaded, will ſtand ſuperiour to thoſe unmerited reproaches, which aſſault his character, and preſerve an unbroken repoſe amidſt the little noiſe and ſtrife of ignorant or malicious tongues. Farewell. I am, &c.

LET-

LETTER LV.

To CLEORA.

Aug. 11, 1708.

THO' it is but a few hours ſince I parted from my Cleora; yet I have already, you ſee, taken up my pen to write to her. You muſt not expect, however, in this, or in any of my future letters, that I ſay fine things to you; ſince I only intend to tell you true ones. My heart is too full to be regular, and too ſincere to be ceremonious. I have changed the manner, not the ſtyle of my former converſations: and I write to you, as I uſed to talk to you, without form or art. Tell me then, with the ſame undiſſembled ſincerity, what effect this abſence has upon your uſual chearfulneſs? as I will honeſtly confeſs on my own part, that I am too intereſted to wiſh a circumſtance ſo little conſiſtent with my own repoſe, ſhould be altogether reconcilable to yours. I have attempted, however, to purſue your advice, and divert myſelf

myſelf by the ſubject you recommended to my thoughts: but it is impoſſible, I perceive, to turn off the mind at once from an object, which it has long dwelt upon with pleaſure. My heart, like a poor bird which is hunted from her neſt, is ſtill returning to the place of its affections, and after ſome vain efforts to fly off, ſettles again where all its cares and all its tenderneſs are centered. Adieu.

LET-

LETTER LVI.

To PALAMEDES.

Feb. 13, 1711.

IF one would rate any particular merit according to its true valuation, it may be neceſſary, perhaps, to conſider how far it can be juſtly claimed by mankind in general. I am ſure, at leaſt, when I read the very uncommon ſentiments of your laſt letter, I found their judicious author riſe in my eſteem, by reflecting, that there is not a more ſingular character in the world, than that of a thinking man. It is not merely having a ſucceſſion of ideas, which lightly ſkim over the mind, that can with any propriety be ſtyled by that denomination. It is obſerving them ſeparately and diſtinctly, and ranging them under their reſpective claſſes; it is calmly and ſteddily viewing our opinions on every ſide, and reſolutely tracing them thro' all their conſequences and connections, that conſtitutes the man of reflection, and diſtinguiſhes reaſon from fancy. Providence,

dence, indeed, does not ſeem to have formed any very conſiderable number of our ſpecies for an extenſive exerciſe of this higher faculty; as the thoughts of the far greater part of mankind, are neceſſarily reſtrained within the ordinary purpoſes of animal life. But even if we look up to thoſe who move in much ſuperiour orbits, and who have opportunities to improve, as well as leiſure to exerciſe their underſtandings; we ſhall find, that thinking is one of the laſt exerted privileges of cultivated humanity.

It is, indeed, an operation of the mind which meets with many obſtructions to check its juſt and free direction; but there are two principles which prevail more or leſs in the conſtitutions of moſt men, that particularly contribute to keep this faculty of the ſoul unemployed: I mean pride and indolence. To deſcend to truth thro' the tedious progreſſion of well-examined deductions, is conſidered as a reproach to the quickneſs of underſtanding; as it is much too laborious a method for any but thoſe

thoſe who are poſſeſſed of a vigorous and reſolute activity of mind. For this reaſon the greater part of our ſpecies generally chooſe either to ſeize upon their concluſions at once, or to take them by rebound from others, as beſt ſuiting with their vanity or their lazineſs. Accordingly Mr. Locke obſerves, that there are not ſo many errors and wrong opinions in the world, as is generally imagined. Not that he thinks mankind are by any means uniform in embracing truth; but becauſe the majority of them, he maintains, have no thought or opinion at all about thoſe doctrines concerning which they raiſe the greateſt clamour. Like the common ſoldiers in an army, they follow where their leaders direct, without knowing, or even enquiring, into the cauſe for which they ſo warmly contend.

THIS will account for the ſlow ſteps by which truth has advanced in the world, on one ſide, and for thoſe abſurd ſyſtems which, at different periods, have had an univerſal currency on the other. For there

is

is a ſtrange diſpoſition in human nature, either blindly to tread the ſame paths that have been traverſed by others, or to ſtrike out into the moſt devious extravagancies: the greater part of the world will either totally renounce their reaſon, or reaſon only from the wild ſuggeſtions of an heated imagination.

From the ſame ſource may be derived thoſe diviſions and animoſities which break the union both of publick and private ſocieties, and turn the peace and harmony of human intercourſe into diſſonance and contention. For while men judge and act by ſuch meaſures as have not been proved by the ſtandard of diſpaſſionate reaſon, they muſt equally be miſtaken in their eſtimates both of their own conduct and that of others.

If we turn our view from active to contemplative life, we may have occaſion, perhaps, to remark, that thinking is no leſs uncommon in the literary than the civil world. The number of thoſe writers who

who can with any juſtneſs of expreſſion be termed thinking authors, would not form a very copious library, tho' one were to take in all of that kind which both antient and modern times have produced. Neceſſarily, I imagine, muſt one exclude from a collection of this ſort, all criticks, commentators, modern Latin poets, tranſlators, and, in ſhort, all that numerous under-tribe in the commonwealth of literature that owe their exiſtence merely to the thoughts of others. I ſhould reject for the ſame reaſon ſuch compilers as Valerius Maximus and Aulus Gellius: tho' it muſt be owned, indeed, their works have acquired an accidental value, as they preſerve to us ſeveral curious traces of antiquity, which time would otherwiſe have entirely worn out. Thoſe teeming geniuſes likewiſe who have propagated the fruits of their ſtudies thro' a long ſeries of tracts, would have little pretence, I believe, to be admitted as writers of reflection. For this reaſon I cannot regret the loſs of thoſe incredible numbers of compo-

compoſitions which ſome of the ancients are ſaid to have produced:

Quale fuit Caſſi rapido ferventius amni
Ingenium; capſis quem fama eſt eſſe libriſque
Ambuſtum propriis. —— HOR.

Thus Epicurus, we are told, left behind him three hundred volumes of his own works, wherein he had not inſerted a ſingle quotation; and we have it upon the authority of Varro's own words*, that he himſelf compoſed four hundred and ninety books. Seneca aſſures us, that Didymus the grammarian wrote no leſs than four thouſand; but Origen, it ſeems, was yet more prolifick, and extended his performances even to ſix thouſand treatiſes. It is obvious to imagine with what ſort

* This paſſage is to be found in Aul. Gellius, who quotes it from a treatiſe which Varro had written concerning the wonderful effects of the number Seven. But the ſubject of this piece cannot be more ridiculous than the ſtyle in which it appears to have been compoſed: for that moſt learned author of his times (as Cicero, if I miſtake not, ſomewhere calls him) informed his readers in that performance, *ſe jam duodecimam annorum hebdomadam ingreſſum eſſe, et ad eum diem ſeptuaginta hebdomadas librorum conſcripſiſſe.* Aul. Gell. iii. 10.

of

of materials the productions of ſuch expeditious workmen were wrought up: ſound thought and well-matured reflections could have no ſhare, we may be ſure, in theſe haſty performances. Thus are books multiplied, whilſt authors are ſcarce; and ſo much eaſier is it to write than to think! But ſhall I not myſelf, Palamedes, prove an inſtance that it is ſo, if I ſuſpend any longer your own more important reflections, by interrupting you with ſuch as mine? Adieu. I am, &c.

LETTER LVII.

To CLYTANDER.

Nov. 7, 1716.

CAN it then be true, Clytander, that after all the fine things which have been ſaid concerning the love of our Country, it owes its riſe to the principles you mention, and was originally propagated among mankind in order to cheat them into the ſervice of the community? And is it thus, at laſt, that the moſt generous of the human paſſions, inſtead of bearing the ſacred ſignature of nature, can produce no higher marks of its legitimacy than the ſuſpicious impreſs of art? The queſtion is worth, at leaſt, a few thoughts; and I will juſt run over the principal objections in your letter, without drawing them up, however, in a regular form.

THAT the true happineſs of the individual cannot ariſe from the ſingle exerciſe of the mere ſelfiſh principles, is evident, I think, above all reaſonable contra-

contradiction. If a man would thoroughly enjoy his own being, he muſt of neceſſity look beyond it; his private ſatisfactions always encreaſing in the ſame proportion with which he promotes thoſe of others. Thus ſelf-intereſt, if rightly directed, flows through the nearer charities of relations, friends, and dependents, till it riſes, and dilates itſelf, into general benevolence. But if every addition which we make to the welfare of others, be really an advancement of our own; the love of our country muſt neceſſarily, upon a principle of ſelf-intereſt, be a paſſion founded in the ſtricteſt reaſon: becauſe it is a diſpoſition pregnant with the greateſt poſſible good, which the limited powers of man are capable of producing. Benevolence, therefore, points to our country, as to her only adequate mark: whatever falls ſhort of that glorious end, is too ſmall for her full gratification; and all beyond is too immenſe for her graſp.

THUS our country appears to have a claim to our affection, as it has a corre-

pondent paſſion in the human breaſt: a paſſion, not raiſed by the artifices of policy, or propagated by the infection of enthuſiaſm, but neceſſarily reſulting from the original conſtitution of our ſpecies, and conducive to the higheſt *private* advantage of each individual. When Curtius, therefore, or the two Decii, ſacrificed their lives, in order to reſcue their community from the calamities with which it was threatened; they were by no means impelled (as you ſeem to repreſent them) by a political phrenſy, but acted on the moſt ſolid and rational principles. The method, they purſued for that purpoſe was dictated, I confeſs, by the moſt abſurd and groundleſs ſuperſtition: yet while the impreſſion of that national belief remained ſtrong upon their minds, and they were thoroughly perſuaded that falling in the manner we are aſſured they did, was the only effectual means of preſerving their country from ruin; they took the moſt rational meaſures of conſulting their private happineſs, by thus conſenting to become the publick

victims. Could it even be admitted (what with any degree of probability never, indeed, can be admitted) that theſe glorious heroes conſidered fame as the vaineſt of ſhadows, and had no hopes of an after-life in any other ſcene of exiſtence; ſtill however their conduct might be juſtified as perfectly wiſe. For, ſurely, to a mind that was not wholly immerſed in the loweſt dregs of the moſt contracted ſelfiſhneſs; that had not totally extinguiſhed every generous and ſocial affection; the thoughts of having preferred a mere joyleſs exiſtence (for ſuch it muſt have been) to the ſuppoſed preſervation of numbers of one's fellow creatures, muſt have been far more painful than a thouſand deaths.

I CANNOT, however, but agree with you, that this affection was productive of infinite miſchief to mankind, as it broke out among the Romans, in the impious ſpirit of their unjuſt conqueſts. But it ſhould be remembered at the ſame time, that it is the uſual artifice of ambition, to maſk

herſelf in the ſemblance of patriotiſm. And it can be no juſt objection to the nobleſt of the ſocial paſſions, that it is capable of being inflamed beyond its natural heat, and turned, by the arts of policy, to promote thoſe deſtructive purpoſes, which it was originally implanted to prevent.

THIS zeal for our country may indeed become irrational, not only when it thus puſhes us on to act counter to the natural rights of any other community; but likewiſe when it impels us to take the meaſures of violence in oppoſition to the general ſenſe of our own. For may not publick happineſs be eſtimated by the ſame ſtandard as that of private? and as every man's own opinion muſt determine his particular ſatisfaction; ſhall not the general opinion be conſidered as deciſive in the queſtion concerning general intereſt? Far am I, however, from inſinuating, that the true welfare of mankind in their collective capacities depends ſingly upon a prevailing fancy, any more than it does

in

in their ſeparate: undoubtedly in both inſtances they may equally embrace a falſe intereſt. But whenever this is the caſe, I ſhould hardly imagine that the love of our country, on the one hand, or of our neighbour, on the other, would juſtify any methods of bringing them to a wiſer choice, than thoſe of calm and rational perſuaſion.

I CANNOT at preſent recollect which of the antient authors it is that mentions the Cappadocians to have been ſo enamoured of ſubjection to a deſpotick power, as to refuſe the enjoyment of their liberties, tho' generouſly tendered to them by the Romans. Scarcely, I ſuppoſe, can there be an inſtance produced of a more remarkable depravity of national taſte, and of a more falſe calculation of publick welfare: yet even in this inſtance it ſhould ſeem the higheſt injuſtice to have attempted by force, and at the expence, perhaps, of half the lives in the ſtate, the introduction of a more improved ſyſtem of government.

In this notion I am not ſingular, but have the authority of Plato himſelf on my ſide, who held it as a maxim of undoubted truth in politicks, that the prevailing ſentiments of a ſtate, how much ſoever miſtaken, ought by no means to be oppoſed by the meaſures of violence: A maxim, which if certain pretended or miſguided patriots had happily embraced, much effuſion of civil blood had been lately ſpared to our nation. Adieu. I am, &c.

LET-

LETTER LVIII.

To PALAMEDES.

Aug. 10, 1729.

FORGIVE me, Palamedes, if I miſtruſt an art, which the greateſt of philoſophers has called the art of deceiving, and by which the firſt of orators could perſuade the people that he had conquered at the athletick games, tho' they ſaw him fall at his adverſary's feet. The voice of eloquence ſhould ever, indeed, be heard with caution; and ſhe whoſe boaſt it has formerly been, to make little things appear conſiderable; may diminiſh objects, perhaps, as well as enlarge them, and leſſen even the charms of repoſe. But I have too long experienced the joys of retirement, to quit her arms for a more lively miſtreſs; and I can look upon ambition, tho' adorned in all the ornaments of your oratory, with the cool indifference of the moſt confirmed Stoick. To confeſs

confeſs the whole truth, I am too proud to endure a repulſe, and too humble to hope for ſucceſs: qualities little favourable, I imagine, to the pretenſions of him who would claim the glittering prizes, which animate thoſe that run the race of ambition. Let thoſe honours, then, you mention, be inſcribed on the tombs of others; be it rather told on mine, that I lived and died

Unplac'd, unpenſion'd, no man's heir or ſlave.

And is not this a privilege as valuable as any of thoſe which you have painted to my view, in all the warmeſt colours of your enlivening eloquence? Bruyere, at leaſt, has juſt now aſſured me, that "to "pay one's court to no man, nor expect "any to pay court to you, is the moſt "agreeable of all ſituations; it is the "true golden age, ſays he, and the moſt "natural ſtate of man."

BELIEVE me, however, I am not in the miſtake of thoſe whom you juſtly condemn

demn, as imagining that wiſdom is the companion only of retirement, and that virtue enters not the more open and conſpicuous walks of life: But I will confeſs at the ſame time, that tho' it is to Tully I give my applauſe, it is Atticus that has my affection.

"LIFE, ſays a celebrated antient, may "be compared to the Olympick games: "ſome enter into thoſe aſſemblies for "glory, and others for gain; while there "is a third party (and thoſe by no means "the moſt contemptible) who chooſe to "be merely ſpectators." I need not tell you, Palamedes, how early it was my inclination to be numbered with the laſt; and as nature has not formed me with powers, am I not obliged to her for having diveſted me of every inclination for bearing a part in the ambitious contentions of the world? Providence, indeed, ſeems to have deſigned ſome tempers for the obſcure ſcenes of life; as there are ſome plants which flouriſh beſt in the ſhade.

But

But the loweſt ſhrub has its uſe, you are ſenſible, as well as the loftieſt oak; and perhaps your friend may find ſome method of convincing you, that even the humbleſt talents are not given in vain. Farewell. I am, &c.

LET-

LETTER LIX.

To HORTENSIUS.

ARE you aware, Hortenſius, how far I may miſlead you, when you are willing to reſign your ſelf to my guidance, through the regions of criticiſm? Remember, however, that I take the lead in theſe paths, not in confidence of my own ſuperior knowledge of them, but in compliance with a requeſt, which I never yet knew how to refuſe. In ſhort, Hortenſius, I give you my ſentiments, becauſe it is my ſentiments you require: but I give them at the ſame time rather as doubts than deciſions.

After having thus acknowledged my inſufficiency for the office you have aſſigned me, I will venture to confeſs that the poet who has gained over your approbation, has been far leſs ſucceſsful with mine. I have ever thought, with a very celebrated modern writer, that

Le vers le mieux rempli, la plus noble pensée,
Ne peut plaire à l'eſprit quand l'oreille eſt bleſsée. Boileau.

Thus, tho' I admit there is both wit in the raillery, and ſtrength in the ſentiments of your friend's moral epiſtle, it by no means falls in with thoſe notions I have formed to myſelf, concerning the eſſential requiſites in compoſitions of this kind. He ſeems indeed to have widely deviated from the model he profeſſes to have had in view, and is no more like Horace than *Hyperion to a Satyr*. His deficiency in point of verſification, not to mention his want of elegance in the general manner of his poem, is ſufficient to deſtroy the pretended reſemblance. Nothing, in truth, can be more abſurd, than to write in poetical meaſure, and yet neglect harmony; as of all the kinds of falſe ſtyle, that which is neither proſe nor verſe, but I know not what inartificial combination of powerleſs words bordered with rhyme, is far, ſurely, the moſt inſufferable.

BUT you are of opinion, I perceive, (and it is an opinion in which you are not ſingular) that a negligence of this kind may be juſtified by the authority of the Roman ſatiriſt: yet ſurely thoſe who entertain that notion, have not thoroughly attended either to the precepts or the practice of Horace. He has attributed, I confeſs, his ſatirical compoſitions to the inſpiration of a certain Muſe, whom he diſtinguiſhes by the title of the *Muſa pedeſtris*; and it is this expreſſion which ſeems to have miſled the generality of his imitators. But tho' he will not allow her to fly, he by no means intends ſhe ſhould creep: on the contrary, it may be ſaid of the Muſe of Horace, as of the Eve of Milton, that

——*grace is in all her ſteps.*

That this was the idea which Horace himſelf had of her, is evident, not only from the general air which prevails in his ſatires and epiſtles, but from ſeveral expreſs declarations, which he lets fall in his progreſs thro' them. Even when he

ſpeaks

ſpeaks of her in his greateſt fits of modeſty, and deſcribes her as exhibited in his own moral writings, he particularly inſiſts upon the eaſe and harmony of her motions. Tho' he humbly diſclaims, indeed, all pretenſions to the higher poetry, the *acer ſpiritus et vis*, as he calls it; he repreſents his ſtyle as being governed by the *tempora certa modoſque*, as flowing with a certain regular and agreeable cadence. Accordingly, we find him particularly condemning his predeceſſor Lucilius, for the diſſonance of his numbers; and he profeſſes to have made the experiment, whether the ſame kind of moral ſubjects might not be treated in more ſoft and eaſy meaſures:

Quid vetat et noſmet Lucili ſcripta legentes,
Quærere num illius, num rerum dura negarit
Verſiculos natura magis factos et euntes
Mollius?

The truth is, a tuneful cadence is the ſingle prerogative of poetry which he pretends

tends to claim to his writings of this kind: and ſo far is he from thinking it uneſſential, that he acknowledged it as the only ſeparation which diſtinguiſhes them from proſe. If that were once to be broken down, and the muſical order of his words deſtroyed, there would not, he tells us, be the leaſt appearance of poetry remaining:

Non ——
Invenias etiam diſjecti membra poetæ.

HOWEVER, when he delivers himſelf in this humble ſtrain, he is not, you will obſerve, ſketching out a plan of this ſpecies of poetry in general; but ſpeaking merely of his own performances in particular. His demands riſe much higher, when he informs us what he expects of thoſe, who would ſucceed in compoſitions of this moral poetry. He then, not only requires flowing numbers, but an expreſſion conciſe and unincumbered; wit exerted with good-breeding, and managed with reſerve; as upon ſome occaſions the ſentiments may be enforced with all the

ſtrength of eloquence and poetry: And tho' in ſome parts the piece may appear with a more ſerious and ſolemn caſt of colouring, yet upon the whole, he tells us, it muſt be lively and *riant*. This I take to be his meaning in the following paſſage:

Eſt brevitate opus, ut currat ſententia, neu ſe
Impediat verbis laſſas onerantibus aures;
Et ſermone opus eſt modo triſti, ſæpe jocoſo,
Defendente vicem modo rhetoris atque poetæ;
Interdum urbani, parcentis viribus atque
Extenuantis eas conſulto ——

Such, then, was the notion which Horace had of this kind of writing. And if there is any propriety in theſe his rules, if they are founded on the truth of taſte and art; I fear the performance in queſtion, with numberleſs others of the ſame ſtamp (which have not however wanted admirers) muſt inevitably ſtand condemned. The truth of it is, moſt of the pieces which

which are uſually produced upon this plan, rather give one an image of Lucilius than of Horace: the authors of them ſeem to miſtake the aukward negligence of the favourite of Scipio, for the eaſy air of the friend of Mæcenas.

You will ſtill tell me, perhaps, that the example of Horace himſelf is an unanſwerable objection to the notion I have embraced; as there are numberleſs lines in his ſatires and epiſtles, where the verſification is evidently neglected. But are you ſure, Hortenſius, that thoſe lines which ſound ſo unharmonius to a modern ear, had the ſame effect upon a Roman one? For myſelf, at leaſt, I am much inclined to believe the contrary: and it ſeems highly incredible, that he who had ventured to cenſure Lucilius for the uncouthneſs of his numbers, ſhould himſelf be notoriouſly guilty of the very fault, againſt which he ſo ſtrongly exclaims. Moſt certain it is, that the delicacy of the antients with reſpect to numbers, was far ſuperior to any thing that modern taſte

can pretend to; and that they diſcovered differences, which are to us abſolutely imperceptible. To mention only one remarkable inſtance: A very antient writer has obſerved upon the following verſe in Virgil,

Arma virumque cano, Trojæ qui primus ab oris,

that if inſtead of *primus* we were to pronounce it *primis* (*is* being long and *us* ſhort,) the entire harmony of the line would be deſtroyed. But whoſe ear is now ſo exquiſitely ſenſible, as to perceive the diſtinction between thoſe two quantities? Some refinement of this kind, might probably give muſick to thoſe lines in Horace, which now ſeem ſo untuneable.

In ſubjects of this nature it is not poſſible, perhaps, to expreſs one's ideas in any very preciſe and determinate manner. I will only therefore in general obſerve with reſpect to the requiſite ſtyle of theſe performances, that it conſiſts in a natural

eaſe of expreſſion, an elegant familiarity of phraſe, which tho' formed of the moſt uſual terms of language, has yet a grace and energy, no leſs ſtriking than that of a more elevated diction. There is a certain lively colouring peculiar to compoſitions in this way, which, without being ſo bright and glowing as is neceſſary for the higher poetry, is nevertheleſs equally removed from whatever appears harſh and dry. But particular inſtances will perhaps better illuſtrate my meaning, than any thing I can farther ſay to explain it. There is ſcarce a line in the moral epiſtles of Mr. Pope, which might not be produced for this purpoſe. I chooſe, however, to lay before you the following verſes, not as preferring them to many others which might be quoted from that inimitable ſatiriſt; but as they afford me an opportunity of comparing them with a verſion of the ſame original lines, of which they are an imitation; and by that means of ſhewing you at one view what I conceive is, and is not, in the true manner of Horace:

Peace is my dear delight,—not Fleury's more;
But touch me, and no minister so sore:
Whoe'er offends, at some unlucky time,
Slides into verse, and hitches in a rhyme;
Sacred to ridicule his whole life long,
And the sad burden of some merry song.

I will refer you to your own memory for the Latin passage, from whence Mr. Pope has taken the general hint of these verses; and content myself with adding a translation of the lines from Horace by another hand:

Behold me blameless bard, how fond of peace!
But he who hurts me (nay, I will be heard)
Had better take a lion by the beard;
His eyes shall weep the folly of his tongue,
By laughing crouds in rueful ballad sung.

There is a strength and spirit in the former of these passages, and a flatness and languor in the latter, which cannot fail of being discovered by every reader of the least delicacy of discernment: and yet the words

which compoſe them both, are equally ſounding and ſignificant. The rules then, which I juſt now mentioned from Horace, will point out the real cauſe of the different effects which theſe two paſſages produce in our minds; as the paſſages themſelves will ſerve to confirm the truth and juſtice of the rules. In the lines from Mr. Pope, one of the principal beauties will be found to conſiſt in the ſhortneſs of the expreſſion; whereas the ſentiments in the other are too much incumbered with words. Thus, for inſtance,

Peace is my dear delight ——

is pleaſing, becauſe it is conciſe; as

Behold me blameleſs bard, how fond of peace!

is, in compariſon of the former, the *verba laſſas onerantia aures*. Another diſtinguiſhing perfection in the imitator of Horace, is that ſpirit of gaiety which he has diffuſed thro' theſe lines, not to mention thoſe happy, tho' familiar, images of *ſliding* into verſe and *hitching* in a rhyme; which

can never be ſufficiently admired. But the tranſlator, on the contrary, has caſt too ſerious an air over his numbers, and appears with an emotion and earneſtneſs that diſappoints the force of his ſatire:

——*Nay I will be heard,*

has the mien of a man in a paſſion; and

His eyes ſhall weep the folly of his tongue:

though a good line in itſelf, is much too ſolemn and tragical for the undiſturbed pleaſantry of Horace.

But I need not enter more minutely into an examination of theſe paſſages. The general hints I have thrown out in this letter, will ſuffice to ſhew you wherein I imagine the true manner of Horace conſiſts. And after all, perhaps, it can no more be explained, than acquired, by rules of art. It is what true genius can only execute, and juſt taſte alone diſcover. I am, &c.

LET-

LETTER LX.

To PHILOTES.

April 9, 1730.

THERE is no advantage which attends a popular genius that I am ſo much inclined to envy, as the privilege of rendering merit conſpicuous. An author who has raiſed the attention of the publick to his productions, and gained a whole nation for his audience, may be conſidered as guardian of the temple of fame, and inveſted with the prerogative of giving entrance to whomſoever he deems worthy of that glorious diſtinction. But the praiſe of an ordinary writer, obſtructs rather than advances the honour due to merit, and ſullies the luſtre it means to celebrate. Impotent panegyrick operates like a blight wherever it falls, and injures all that it touches. Accordingly, Harry the IV. of France was wont humourouſly to aſcribe his early grey hairs, to the effect of numberleſs wretched compliments

pliments, which were paid him by a certain ridiculous orator of his times. But tho' the wreathes of folly ſhould not diſgrace the temples they ſurround; they wither, at leaſt, as ſoon as received: and if they ſhould not be offenſive, moſt certainly, however, they will be tranſient. Whereas thoſe, on the contrary, with which an Horace or a Boileau, an Addiſon or a Pope, have crowned the virtues of their contemporaries, are as permanent as they are illuſtrious, and will preſerve their colours and fragrance to remoteſt ages.

If I could thus weave the garlands of unfading applauſe; if I were in the number of thoſe choſen ſpirits whoſe approbation is Fame, your friend ſhould not want that diſtinguiſhing tribute which his virtues deſerve, and you requeſt. I would tell the world (and tell it in a voice that ſhould be heard far and remembered long) that Euſebes, with all the knowledge and experience of theſe later ages, has all the innocence and ſimplicity of the earlieſt:

that

that he enforces the doctrines of his ſacred function, not with the vain pomp of oſtentatious eloquence, but with the far more powerful perſuaſion of active and exemplary virtue: that he ſoftens the ſeverity of precept with the eaſe and familiarity of converſation, and by generouſly mingling with the meaneſt committed to his care, inſinuates the inſtructor under the air of the companion: that whilſt he thus fills up the circle of his private ſtation, he ſtill turns his regards to the publick, and employs his genius, his induſtry, and his fortune, in proſecuting and perfecting thoſe diſcoveries, which tend moſt to the general benefit of mankind: in a word, that whilſt others of his order are contending for the ambitious prizes of eccleſiaſtical dignities, it is his glorious preeminence to merit the higheſt, without enjoying or ſolliciting even the loweſt. This, and yet more than this, the world ſhould hear of your friend, if the world were inclined to liſten to my voice. But tho' you perhaps, Philotes, may be willing to give audience to my Muſe,

——*nam-*

——— *namque Tu ſolebas*
Meas eſſe aliquid putare nugas. Catul.

can ſhe hope to find favour likewiſe in the ſight of the publick? Let me then, rather content myſelf with the ſilent admiration of thoſe virtues, which I am not worthy to celebrate; and leave it to others to place the good works of Euſebes where they may *ſhine forth before men.* I am, &c.

LET-

LETTER LXI.

To PHIDIPPUS.

THIS well, my friend, that the age of transformation is no more: otherwiſe I ſhould tremble for your ſevere attack upon the Muſes, and expect to ſee the ſtory of your metamorphoſis embelliſh the poetical miracles of ſome modern Ovid. But it is long ſince the fate of the Piërides has gained any credit in the world, and you may now, in full ſecurity, contemn the divinities of Parnaſſus, and ſpeak irreverently of the daughters of Jove himſelf. You ſee, nevertheleſs, how highly the antients conceived of them, when they thus repreſented them as the offspring of the great father of gods and men. You reject, I know, this article of the heathen creed: but I may venture, however, to aſſert, that philoſophy will confirm what fable has thus invented, and that the Muſes are, in ſtrict truth, of heavenly extraction.

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THE charms of the fine arts are, indeed, literally derived from the author of all nature, and founded in the original frame and conſtitution of the human mind. Accordingly, the general principles of *taſte* are common to our whole ſpecies, and ariſe from that internal ſenſe of beauty which every man, in ſome degree at leaſt, evidently poſſeſſes. No rational mind can be ſo wholly void of all perceptions of this ſort, as to be capable of contemplating the various objects that ſurround him, with one equal coldneſs and indifference. There are certain forms which muſt neceſſarily fill the ſoul with agreeable ideas, and ſhe is inſtantly determined in her approbation of them, previous to all reaſoning concerning their uſe and convenience. It is upon theſe general principles, that what is called fine taſte in the arts is founded; and conſequently is by no means ſo precarious and unſettled an idea, as you chooſe to deſcribe it. The truth is, taſte is nothing more than this univerſal ſenſe of beauty, rendered more

exqui-

exquiſite by genius, and more correct by cultivation; and it is from the ſimple and original ideas of this ſort, that the mind learns to form her judgment of the higher and more complex kinds. Accordingly, the whole circle of the imitative and oratorical arts, is governed by the ſame general rules of criticiſm; and to prove the certainty of theſe with reſpect to any one of them, is to eſtabliſh their validity with regard to all the reſt. I will therefore conſider the criterion of taſte in relation only to fine writing.

EACH ſpecies of compoſition has its diſtinct perfections: and it would require a much larger compaſs than a letter affords, to prove their reſpective beauties to be derived from truth and nature; and conſequently reducible to a regular and preciſe ſtandard. I will only mention therefore thoſe general properties which are eſſential to them all, and without which they muſt neceſſarily be defective in their ſeveral kinds. Theſe, I think, may be comprehended under uniformity

in

in the deſign, variety and reſemblance in the metaphors and ſimilitudes, together with propriety and harmony in the diction. Now ſome or all of theſe qualities conſtantly attend our ideas of beauty, and neceſſarily raiſe that agreeable perception of the mind, in what object ſoever they appear. The charms of fine compoſition then, are ſo far from exiſting only in the heated imagination of an enthuſiaſtick admirer, that they reſult from the conſtitution of nature herſelf. And perhaps the principles of criticiſm are as certain and indiſputable, even as thoſe of the mathematicks. Thus, for inſtance, that order is preferable to confuſion, that harmony is more pleaſing than diſſonance, with ſome few other axioms upon which the ſcience is built; are truths which ſtrike at once upon the mind with the ſame force of conviction, as that the whole is greater than any of its parts, or that if from equals you take away equals, the remainder will be equal. And in both caſes, the propoſitions which reſt upon theſe plain and obvious maxims,

ſeem

ſeem equally capable of the ſame evidence of demonſtration.

But as every intellectual, as well as animal, faculty is improved and ſtrengthened by exerciſe; the more the ſoul exerts this her internal ſenſe of beauty upon any particular object, the more ſhe will enlarge and refine her reliſh of that peculiar ſpecies. For this reaſon the works of thoſe great maſters, whoſe performances have been long and generally admired, ſupply a farther criterion of fine taſte, equally fixed and certain as that which is immediately derived from nature herſelf. The truth is, fine writing is only the art of raiſing agreeable ſenſations of the intellectual kind; and therefore, as by examining thoſe original forms which are adapted to awaken this perception in the mind, we learn what thoſe qualities are which conſtitute beauty in general; ſo by obſerving the peculiar conſtruction of thoſe compoſitions of genius which have always pleaſed, we perfect our idea of fine writing in particular. It is this united approbation, in perſons of

different ages and of various characters and languages, that Longinus has made the teſt of the true ſublime; and he might with equal juſtice have extended the ſame criterion, to all the inferior excellencies of elegant compoſition. Thus the deference paid to the performances of the great maſters of antiquity, is fixed upon juſt and ſolid reaſons: It is not becauſe Ariſtotle and Horace have given us the rules of criticiſm, that we ſubmit to their authority; it is becauſe thoſe rules are derived from works which have been diſtinguiſhed by the uninterrupted admiration of all the more improved part of mankind, from their earlieſt appearance down to this preſent hour. For whatever, thro' a long ſeries of ages, has been univerſally eſteemed as beautiful, cannot but be conformable to our juſt and natural ideas of beauty.

THE oppoſition, however, which ſometimes divides the opinions of thoſe whoſe judgments may be ſuppoſed equal and perfect, is urged as a powerful objection againſt the reality of a fixed canon

of criticiſm: it is a proof, you think, that after all which can be ſaid of fine taſte, it muſt ultimately be reſolved into the peculiar reliſh of each individual. But this diverſity of ſentiments will not, of itſelf, deſtroy the evidence of the criterion; ſince the ſame effect may be produced by numberleſs other cauſes. A thouſand accidental circumſtances may concur in counteracting the force of the rule, even allowing it to be ever ſo fixed and invariable, when left in its free and uninfluenced ſtate. Not to mention that falſe bias which party or perſonal diſlikes may fix upon the mind, the moſt unprejudiced critick will find it difficult to diſengage himſelf entirely from thoſe partial affections in favour of particular beauties, to which either the general courſe of his ſtudies, or the peculiar caſt of his temper, may have rendered him moſt ſenſible. But as perfection in any work of genius reſults from the united beauty and propriety of its ſeveral diſtinct parts, and as it is impoſſible that any human compoſition ſhould poſſeſs all thoſe qualities in their

higheſt and moſt ſovereign degree; the mind, when ſhe pronounces judgment upon any piece of this ſort, is apt to decide of its merit, as thoſe circumſtances which ſhe moſt admires either prevail or are deficient. Thus, for inſtance, the excellency of the Roman maſters in painting, conſiſts in beauty of deſign, nobleneſs of attitude, and delicacy of expreſſion; but the charms of good colouring are wanting. On the contrary, the Venetian ſchool is ſaid to have neglected deſign a little too much; but at the ſame time has been more attentive to the grace and harmony of well-diſpoſed lights and ſhades. Now it will be admitted by all admirers of this noble art, that no compoſition of the pencil can be perfect where either of theſe qualities are abſent; yet the moſt accompliſhed judge may be ſo particularly ſtruck with one or other of theſe excellencies, in preference to the reſt, as to be influenced in his cenſure or applauſe of the whole tablature, by the predominancy or deficiency of his favourite beauty. Something of this kind (where the meaner prejudices

do

do not operate) is ever, I am perſuaded, the occaſion of that diverſity of ſentences which we occaſionally hear pronounced by the moſt improved judges, on the ſame piece. But this only ſhews, that much caution is neceſſary to give a fine taſte its full and unobſtructed effect; not that it is in itſelf uncertain and precarious. I am, &c.

LETTER LXII.

To ORONTES.

March 10, 1718.

WHAT haughty Sachariſſa has put you out of humour with her whole ſex? for it is ſome diſappointment, I ſuſpect, of the tender kind, that has thus ſharpened the edge of your ſatire, and pointed its invective againſt the fairer half of our ſpecies. You were not miſtaken, however, when you ſuppoſed I ſhould prove no convert to your doctrine; but riſe up as an advocate, where I profeſs myſelf an admirer. I am not, 'tis true, altogether of old Montaigne's opinion, that the ſouls of both ſexes *ſont jettez* (as he expreſſes it) *en meſme moule:* on the contrary, I am willing enough to join with you in thinking, that they maybe wrought off from different models. Yet the *caſts* may be equally perfect, tho' it ſhould be allowed that they are eſſentially different. Nature, it is certain, has traced out a ſe-

parate

parate courſe of action for the two ſexes; and as they are appointed to diſtinct offices of life, it is not improbable that there may be ſomething diſtinct likewiſe in the frame of their minds; that there may be a kind of ſex in the very ſoul.

I cannot, therefore, but wonder, that Plato ſhould have thought it reaſonable to admit them into an equal ſhare of the dignities and offices of his imaginary commonwealth; and that the wiſdom of the antient Egyptians ſhould have ſo ſtrangely inverted the evident intentions of providence, as to confine the men to domeſtick affairs, whilſt the women, it is ſaid, were engaged abroad in the active and laborious ſcenes of buſineſs. Hiſtory, it muſt be owned, will ſupply ſome few female inſtances of all the more maſculine virtues: But appearances of that extraordinary kind are too uncommon, to ſupport the notion of a general equality in the natural powers of their minds.

THUS much, however, ſeems evident, that there are certain moral boundaries which nature has drawn between the two ſexes, and that neither of them can paſs over the limits of the other, without equally deviating from the beauty and decorum of their reſpective characters: Boadicea in armour is, to me at leaſt, as extravagant a ſight, as Achilles in petticoats.

IN determining therefore the comparative merit of the two ſexes, it is no derogation from female excellency, that it differs in kind from that which diſtinguiſhes the male part of our ſpecies. And if in general it ſhall be found (what, upon an impartial enquiry, I believe, will moſt certainly be found) that women fill up their appointed circle of action with greater regularity and dignity than men; the claim of preference cannot juſtly be decided in our favour. In the prudential and œconomical parts of life, I think it undeniable that they riſe far above us. And if true fortitude of mind, is beſt diſcovered by a chear-

a chearful reſignation to the meaſures of providence, we ſhall not find reaſon, perhaps, to claim that moſt ſingular of the human virtues as our peculiar privilege. There are numbers of the other ſex, who, from the natural delicacy of their conſtitution, paſs thro' one continued ſcene of ſuffering from their cradles to their graves, with a firmneſs of reſolution that would deſerve ſo many ſtatues to be erected to their memories, if heroiſm were not eſtimated more by the ſplendour than the merit of actions.

But whatever real difference there may be between the moral or intellectual powers of the male and female mind; nature does not ſeem to have marked the diſtinction ſo ſtrongly as our vanity is willing to imagine: and after all, perhaps, education will be found to conſtitute the principal ſuperiority. It muſt be acknowledged, at leaſt, that in this article we have every advantage over the ſofter ſex, that art and induſtry can poſſibly ſecure to us. The moſt animating examples of Greece and Rome

are ſet before us, as early as we are capable of any obſervation; and the nobleſt compoſitions of the antients are given into our hands, almoſt as ſoon as we have ſtrength to hold them: while the employments of the other ſex, at the ſame period of life, are generally the reverſe of every thing that can open and enlarge their minds, or fill them with juſt and rational notions. The truth of it is, female education is ſo much worſe than none, as it is better to leave the mind to its natural and uninſtructed ſuggeſtions, than to lead it into falſe purſuits, and contract its views, by turning them upon the loweſt and moſt trifling objects. We ſeem, indeed, by the manner in which we ſuffer the youth of that ſex to be trained, to conſider women agreeably to the opinion of certain Mahometan doctors, and treat them as if we believed they have no ſouls: why elſe are they

Bred only and compleated to the taſte
Of luſtful appetence, to ſing, to dance,
To dreſs, and troule the tongue, and roll
the eye? MILT.

THIS

THIS ſtrange neglect of cultivating the female mind, can hardly be allowed as good policy, when it is conſidered how much the intereſt of ſociety is concerned in the rectitude of their underſtandings. That ſeaſon of every man's life which is moſt ſuſceptible of the ſtrongeſt impreſſions, is neceſſarily under female direction; as there are few inſtances, perhaps, in which that ſex is not one of the ſecret ſprings which regulates the moſt important movements of private or publick tranſactions. What Cato obſerved of his countrymen, is in one reſpect true of every nation under the ſun: "the Romans," ſaid he, "govern the world, but it is the wo-"men that govern the Romans." Let not, however, a certain pretended Cato of your acquaintance, take occaſion from this maxim to *inſult* a ſecond time that *innocence* he has ſo often *injured*: for I will tell him another maxim as true as the former, that "there are *circumſtances* "wherein no woman has power enough "to controul a man of ſpirit."

If it be true then (as true beyond all peradventure it is) that female influence is thus extenſive; nothing, certainly, can be of more importance, than to give it a proper tendency, by the aſſiſtance of a well-directed education. Far am I from recommending any attempts to render women learned; yet ſurely it is neceſſary they ſhould be raiſed above ignorance. Such a general tincture of the moſt uſeful ſciences as may ſerve to free the mind from vulgar prejudices, and give it a reliſh for the rational exerciſe of its powers, might very juſtly enter into the plan of female erudition. That ſex might be taught to turn the courſe of their reflexions into a proper and advantageous channel, without any danger of rendering them too elevated for the feminine duties of life. In a word, I would have them conſidered as deſigned by Providence for uſe as well as ſhew, and trained up, not only as women, but as rational creatures. Adieu. I am, &c.

LET-

LETTER LXIII.

To PHILOTES.

Dec. 7, 1727.

THE viſits of a friend, like thoſe of the ſun at this ſeaſon, are extremely enlivening. I am ſure at leaſt they would both be particularly acceptable to me at preſent, when my mind is as much over-caſt as the heavens. I hope, therefore, you will not drop the deſign your letter intimates, of ſpending a few days with me in your way to ***. Your company will greatly contribute to diſperſe thoſe clouds of melancholy, which the loſs of a very valuable friend has hung over me. There is ſomething, indeed, in the firſt moments of ſeparation from thoſe, whom a daily commerce and long habitude of friendſhip has grafted upon the heart, that diſorders our whole frame of thought, and diſcolours all one's enjoyments. Let philoſophy aſſiſt with the utmoſt of her vaunted ſtrength, the mind cannot immediately recover the firmneſs

of

of its poſture, when thoſe amicable props upon which it uſed to reſt, are totally removed. Even the moſt indifferent objects with which we have long been familiar, take ſome kind of root in our hearts; and "I ſhould hardly care (as a celebrated author has, with great good-nature, obſerved) "to have an old poſt "pulled up, which I remembered ever "ſince I was a child."

To know how to receive the full ſatisfaction of a preſent enjoyment, with a diſpoſition prepared at the ſame time to yield it up without reluctance, is hardly, I doubt, reconcileable to humanity: pain in being diſunited from thoſe we love, is a tax we muſt be contented to pay, if we would enjoy the pleaſures of the ſocial affections. One would not wiſh, indeed, to be wholly inſenſible to diſquietudes of this kind; and we muſt renounce the moſt refined reliſh of our being, if we would upon all occaſions poſſeſs our ſouls in a Stoical tranquillity.

THAT antient philoſopher, whoſe precept it was, to converſe with our friends as if they might one day prove our enemies; has been juſtly cenſured as advancing a very ungenerous maxim. To remember, however, that we muſt one day moſt certainly be divided from them, is a reflection, methinks, that ſhould enter with us into all our tender connections of every kind. From the preſent diſcompoſure, therefore, of my own breaſt, and from that ſhare which I take in whatever may affect the repoſe of yours, I cannot bid you adieu, without reminding you at the ſame time of the uſeful caution of one of your poetical acquaintance:

Quicquid amas, cupias non placuiſſe nimis.

I am, &c.

LET-

LETTER LXIV.

To EUPHRONIUS.

July 2, 1722.

IT is a pretty obſervation, which I have ſomewhere met, that "the moſt "pleaſing of all harmony ariſes from the "cenſure of a ſingle perſon, when mixed "with the general applauſes of the world." I almoſt ſuſpect, therefore, that you are conſidering the intereſt of your admired author, when you call upon me for my farther objections to his performance; and are for joining me, perhaps, to the number of thoſe who advance his reputation, by oppoſing it. The truth, however, is, you could not have choſen a critick (if a critick I might venture to call myſelf) who has a higher eſteem for all the compoſitions of Mr. Pope; as indeed I look upon every thing that comes from his hands, with the ſame degree of veneration as if it were conſecrated by antiquity. Nevertheleſs, tho' I greatly revere his judgment, I cannot abſolutely renounce my own;

own; and ſince ſome have been bold enough to advance, that even the ſacred writings themſelves do not always ſpeak the language of the Spirit; I may have leave to ſuſpect of the poets what has been aſſerted of the prophets, and ſuppoſe that their pens are not, at all ſeaſons, under the guidance of inſpiration. But as there is ſomething extremely ungrateful to the mind, in dwelling upon thoſe little ſpots that neceſſarily attend the luſtre of all human merit; you muſt allow me to join his beauties with his imperfections, and admire with rapture after having condemned with regret.

THERE is a certain modern figure of ſpeech, which the authors of *The art of ſinking in poetry* have called the *diminiſhing*. This, ſo far as it relates to words only, conſiſts in debaſing a great idea, by expreſſing it in a term of meaner import. Mr. Pope has himſelf now and then fallen into this kind of the *profound*, which he has with ſuch uncommon wit and ſpirit expoſed in the writings of others. Thus

Agamemnon, addreſſing himſelf to Menelaus and Ulyſſes, aſks,

And can you, chiefs, without a bluſh ſurvey
Whole troops *before you* lab'ring *in the* fray?
B. IV.

So likewiſe Pandarus, ſpeaking of Diomed, who is performing the utmoſt efforts of heroiſm in the field of battle, ſays,

——*ſome guardian of the ſkies,*
Involv'd in clouds, protects him in the—fray.
V. 235.

But what would you think, Euphronius, were you to hear of the "imper-"vious foam" and "rough waves of a "*brook?*" would it not put you in mind of that drole thought of the ingenious Dr. Young, in one of his Epiſtles to our author, where he talks of a puddle *in a ſtorm?* yet by thus confounding the properties of the higheſt objects with thoſe of the loweſt, Mr. Pope has turned one of the moſt pleaſing ſimilies in the whole Iliad, into downright burleſque:

As when ſome ſimple ſwain his cot forſakes,
And wide thro' fens an unknown journey takes;

If

If chance a ſwelling brook *his paſſage ſtay,*
And foam impervious *croſs the wand'rer's way,*
Confus'd he ſtops, a length of country paſt,
Eyes the rough waves, *and tir'd, returns at laſt.* V. 734.

This ſwelling brook, however, of Mr. Pope, is in Homer a rapid river, ruſhing with violence into the ſea:

Στηη ἐπ' ωκυροω ποταμω αλαδε προρεοντι. V. 598.

It is one of the eſſential requiſites of an epick poem, and indeed of every other kind of ſerious poetry, that the ſtyle be raiſed above common language; as nothing takes off ſo much from that ſolemnity of diction, from which the poet ought never to depart, as idioms of a vulgar and familiar caſt. Mr. Pope has ſometimes neglected this important rule; but moſt frequently in the introduction of his ſpeeches. To mention only a few inſtances:

That done, *to Phœnix Ajax gave the ſign.* IX. 291.

With that *ſtern Ajax his long ſilence broke.*
IX. 735.

With that *the venerable warrior roſe.*
X. 150.

With that they ſtep'd aſide, *&c.* ——
X. 415.

Whereas Homer generally prefaces his ſpeeches with a dignity of phraſe, that calls up the attention of the reader to what is going to be uttered. Milton has very happily copied his manner in this particular, as well as in many others; and tho' he often falls into a flatneſs of expreſſion, he has never once, I think, committed that error upon occaſions of this kind. He uſually uſhers in his harangues with ſomething characteriſtical of the ſpeaker, or that points out ſome remarkable circumſtance of his preſent ſituation, in the following manner:

—— *Satan, with bold words*
Breaking the horrid ſilence, thus began.
I. 82.

— him thus anſwer'd ſoon his bold compeer, &c. I. 125.

He

He ended frowning ——
on the other ſide uproſe
Belial —
And with perſuaſive accents thus began.
II. 106.

If you compare the effect which an introduction of this deſcriptive ſort has upon the mind, with thoſe low and unawakening expreſſions, which I have marked in the lines I juſt now quoted from our Engliſh Iliad; you will not, perhaps, conſider my objection as altogether without foundation.

All oppoſition of ideas ſhould be carefully avoided in a poem of this kind, as unbecoming the gravity of the heroick Muſe. But does not Mr. Pope ſometimes ſacrifice ſimplicity to falſe ornament, and loſe the majeſty of Homer in the affectations of Ovid? Of this ſort a ſevere critick would, perhaps, eſteem his calling an army marching with ſpears erect, a *moving iron wood:*

Such and ſo thick th'embattel'd ſquadrons
ſtood
With ſpears erect, a moving iron wood.

There ſeems alſo to be an inconſiſtency in the two parts of this deſcription; for the troops are repreſented as ſtanding ſtill, at the ſame time that the circumſtance mentioned of the ſpears, ſhould rather imply (as indeed the truth is) that they were in motion. But if the tranſlator had been faithful to his author in this paſſage, neither of theſe objections could have been raiſed: for in Homer it is,

Τοιαι ——
—— πυκιναι κινυντο φαλαγγες
Κυανεαι, σακεσιν τε και εγχεσιν πεφρικυιαι.
IV. 280.

Is there not likewiſe ſome little tendency to a pun, in thoſe upbraiding lines which Hector addreſſes to Paris?

For thee great Ilion's guardian heroes fall,
Till heaps of dead alone defend *the wall.*

Mr. Pope at leaſts deſerts his guide, in order to give us this conceit of dead men

defending

defending a town; for the original could not poſſibly lead him into it. Homer, with a plainneſs ſuitable to the occaſion, only tells us,

Λαοι μεν φθινυθυσι περι πολιν, αιπυ τε τειχος,
Μαρναμενοι— VI. 327.

TEUCER, in the eighth book, aims a dart at Hector, which, miſſing its way, ſlew Gorythio; upon which we are told,

Another ſhaft the raging archer threw;
That other ſhaft with erring fury flew.
(From Hector Phœbus turn'd the flying wound)
Yet fell not dry or guiltleſs *to the ground.*

A *flying wound* is a thought exactly in the ſpirit of Ovid; but highly unworthy of Pope as well as of Homer: and indeed there is not the leaſt foundation for it in the original. But what do you think of the ſhaft that fell *dry* or *guiltleſs*? where, you ſee, one figurative epithet is added as explanatory of the other. The doubling of epithets, without raiſing the idea, is not allowable in compoſitions of any

kind; but leaſt of all in poetry. It is, ſays Quinctilian, as if every common ſoldier in an army were to be attended with a valet; you encreaſe your number without adding to your ſtrength.

But if it be a fault to croud epithets of the ſame import one upon the other; it is much more ſo to employ ſuch as call off the attention from the principal idea to be raiſed, and turn it upon little or foreign circumſtances. When Æneas is wounded by Tydides, Homer deſcribes Venus as conducting him thro' the thickeſt tumult of the enemy, and conveying him from the field of battle. But while we are following the hero with our whole concern, and trembling for the danger which ſurrounds him on all ſides; Mr. Pope leads us off from our anxiety for Æneas, by an unintereſting epithet relating to the ſtructure of thoſe inſtruments of death, which were every where flying about him; and we are coldly informed, that the darts were *feathered:*

Safe

Safe thro' the ruſhing horſe and feather'd *flight*
Of ſounding ſhafts, ſhe bears him thro' the fight. V. 393.

But as Mr. Pope's epithets ſometimes debaſe the general image to be raiſed; ſo they now and then adorn them with a falſe brilliancy. Thus, ſpeaking of a perſon ſlain by an arrow, he calls it a *pointed death*, IV. 607. deſcribing another who was attacked by numbers at once, he tells us,

A grove of lances glitter'd *at his breaſt.* IV. 621.

and repreſenting a foreſt on fire, he ſays,

In blazing heaps the grove's old honors fall,
And one refulgent *ruin levels all.* X. 201.

But one of the moſt unpardonable inſtances of this kind is, where he relates the death of Hypſenor, a perſon, who, it ſeems, exerciſed the ſacerdotal office:

On

On his broad ſhoulder fell the forceful brand,
Thence glancing downward lopp'd his holy hand,
And ſtain'd with ſacred blood the bluſhing *ſand.*

To take the force of this epithet, we muſt ſuppoſe that the redneſs which appeared upon the ſand on this occaſion, was an effect of its bluſhing to find itſelf ſtained with the blood of ſo ſacred a perſon: than which there cannot be a more forced and unnatural thought. It puts me in mind of a paſſage in a French dramatick writer, who has formed a play upon the ſtory of Pyramus and Thiſbe. The hapleſs maid, addreſſing herſelf to the dagger which lies by the ſide of her lover, breaks out into the following exclamation:

Ah! voici le poignard qui du ſang du ſon maître
S'eſt ſouillé lachement: il en rougit *le traitre.*

Boileau,

Boileau, taking notice of theſe lines, obſerves, *toutes les glaces du Nord enſemble ne ſont pas, à mon ſens, plus froides que cette penſée.* But of the two poets, I know not whether Mr. Pope is not moſt to be condemned: for whatever ſhame the poignard might take to itſelf, for being concerned in the murder of the lover; it is certain that the ſand had not the leaſt ſhare in the death of the prieſt.

THE antient criticks have inſiſted much upon propriety of language; and, indeed, one may with great juſtice ſay, what the inſulted Job does to his impertinent friends, *how forcible are right words!* The truth is, tho' the ſentiment muſt always ſupport the expreſſion, yet the expreſſion muſt give grace and efficacy to the ſentiment; and the ſame thought ſhall frequently be admired or condemned, according to the merit of the particular phraſe in which it is conveyed. For this reaſon, J. Cæſar, in a treatiſe which he wrote concerning the Latin language, calls a judicious choice of words, *the origine*

of

of eloquence; as indeed neither oratory nor poetry can be raiſed to any degree of perfection, where this their principal root is neglected. In this art Virgil particularly excels; and it is in the inimitable grace of his words (as Mr. Dryden ſomewhere juſtly obſerves) wherein that beauty principally conſiſts, which gives ſo inexpreſſible a pleaſure to him, who beſt underſtands their force. No man was ever a more ſkilful maſter of this powerful art, than Mr. Pope; as he has, upon ſeveral occaſions throughout this tranſlation, raiſed and dignified his ſtyle with certain antiquated words and phraſes, that are moſt wonderfully ſolemn and majeſtick. I cannot, however, forbear mentioning an inſtance, where he has employed an obſolete term leſs happily, I think, than is his general cuſtom. It occurs in ſome lines which I juſt now quoted for another purpoſe:

On his broad ſhoulder fell the forceful brand,
Thence glancing downward lopp'd his holy hand. V. 105.

Brand

Brand is ſometimes uſed by Spenſer for a ſword; and in that ſenſe it is here introduced. But as we ſtill retain this word in a different application, it will always be improper to adopt it in its antiquated meaning, becauſe it muſt neceſſarily occaſion ambiguity: an error in ſtyle of all others the moſt to be avoided. Accordingly, every reader of the lines I have quoted, muſt neceſſarily take up an idea very different from that which the poet intends, and which he will carry on with him, till he arrives at the middle of the ſecond verſe. And if he happens to be unacquainted with the language of our old writers, when he comes to

——lopp'd *his ſacred hand*,

he will be loſt in a confuſion of images, and have abſolutely no idea remaining.

THERE is another uncommon elegance in the management of words, which requires a very ſingular turn of genius, and great delicacy of judgment to attain. As the art I juſt before mentioned turns upon

on employing antiquated words with force and propriety; so this consists, in giving the grace of novelty to the received and current terms of a language, by applying them in a new and unexpected manner:

Dixeris egregiè notum si callida verbum
Reddiderit junctura novum.——Hor.

The great caution, however, to be observed in any attempt of this kind, is so judiciously to connect the expressions, as to remove every doubt concerning the signification in which they are designed: for as perspicuity is the end and supreme excellency of writing, there cannot be a more fatal objection to an author's style, than that it stands in need of a commentator. But will not this objection lie against the following verse?

Next artful *Phereclus untimely fell.* V. 75.

The word *artful* is here taken out of its appropriated acceptation, in order to express

——ος χερσιν επιστατο δαιδαλα παντα
Τευχειν.——

But

But however allowable it may be (as indeed it is not only allowable but graceful) to raiſe a word above its ordinary import, when the *callida junctura* (as Horace calls it) determines at once the ſenſe in which it is uſed: yet it ſhould never be caſt ſo far back from its cuſtomary meaning, as to ſtand for an idea which has no relation to what it implies, in its primary and natural ſtate. This would be introducing uncertainty and confuſion into a language; and turning every ſentence into a riddle. Accordingly, after we have travelled on thro' the ſeveral ſucceeding lines in this paſſage, we are obliged to change the idea with which we ſet out; and find at laſt, that by the *artful* Phereclus we are to underſtand, not, what we at firſt apprehended, a man of cunning and deſign; but one who is ſkilled in the mechanical arts.

It is with a liberty of the ſame unſucceſsful kind, that Mr. Pope has rendered

Τον προτερος προσεειπε Λυκαονος αγλαος υιος,
V. 276.

Stern Lycaon's warlike race begun.

I know not by what figure of ſpeech, the whole race of a man can denote his next immediate deſcendant: and, I fear, no ſynecdoche can acquit this expreſſion of nonſenſe. The truth is, whoever ventures to ſtrike out of the common road, muſt be more than ordinarily careful, or he will probably loſe his way.

THIS reminds me of a paſſage or two, where our poet has been extremely injurious to the ſenſe of his author, and made him talk a language which he never uſes; the language, I mean, of abſurdity. In the ſixth Iliad, Agamemnon aſſures Menelaus,

Ιλιȣ εξαπολοιατ', ακηδεςοι παντες —— VI. 60.

But in Mr. Pope's verſion, that chief tells his brother,

Ilion ſhall periſh whole and bury *all.*

Perhaps

Perhaps it may be over nice to remark, that as the deſtruction of Troy is firſt mentioned, it has a little the appearance of nonſenſe to talk afterwards of her burying her ſons. However, the latter part of this verſe directly contradicts the original: for Agamemnon is ſo far from aſſerting, that Ilion ſhould bury all her inhabitants, that he pronounces poſitively, they ſhould not be buried at all: a calamity, in the opinion of the antients, of all others the moſt terrible. But poſſibly the error may lie in the printer, not in the poet; and perhaps the line originally ſtood thus:

Ilion ſhall periſh whole, unbury'd *all*.

If ſo, both my objections vaniſh: and thoſe who are converſant with the preſs, will not think this ſuppoſition improbable; ſince much more unlikely miſtakes often happen, by the careleſsneſs of compoſitors.

But tho' I am willing to make all the allowance poſſible to an author, who raiſes our admiration too often not to have a right to the utmoſt candour, wherever

he fails; yet I can find no excuſe for an unaccountable abſurdity he has fallen into, in tranſlating a paſſage of the tenth book. Diomed and Ulyſſes taking advantage of the night, ſet out in order to view the Trojan camp. In their way they meet with Dolon, who is going from thence to the Grecian, upon an errand of the ſame kind. After having ſeized this unfortunate adventurer, and examined him concerning the ſituation and deſigns of the enemy; Diomed draws his ſword, and ſtrikes off Dolon's head, in the very inſtant that he is ſupplicating for mercy:

Φθεγγομενε δ' αρα τε γε καρη κονιηϛιν εμιχθη.
X. 457.

Mr. Pope has turned this into a moſt extraordinary miracle, by aſſuring us that the head ſpoke after it had quitted the body:

The head yet ſpeaking, mutter'd as it fell.

THIS puts me in mind of a wonder of the ſame kind in the *Fairy Queen*, where Corflambo is repreſented as blaſpheming, after

after his head had been ſtruck off by prince Arthur:

He ſmote at him with all his might and main
So furiouſly, that e're he wiſt, he found
His head before him tumbling on the ground,
The whiles his babbling tongue did yet blaſpheme,
And curſe his God, that did him ſo confound.
Book IV. 8.

But Corflambo was the ſon of a gianteſs, and could conquer whole kingdoms by only looking at them. We may, perhaps, therefore allow him to talk, when every other man muſt be ſilent: whereas there is nothing in the hiſtory of poor Dolon, that can give him the leaſt pretence to this ſingular privilege. The truth is, Mr. Pope ſeems to have been led into this blunder by Scaliger, who has given the ſame ſenſe to the verſe, and then with great wiſdom and gravity obſerves, *falſum eſt a pulmone caput avulſum loqui poſſe.*

THE moſt pleaſing picture in the whole Iliad, is, I think, the parting of Hector and Andromache: and Mr. Pope

has, in general, very ſucceſsfully copied it. But in ſome places he ſeems not to have touched it with that delicacy of pencil, which graces the original: as he has entirely loſt the beauty of one of the figures. Hector is repreſented as extending his arms to embrace the little Aſtyanax, who being terrified with the unuſual appearance of a man in armour, throws himſelf back upon his nurſe's breaſt, and falls into tears. But tho' the Hero and his ſon were deſigned to draw our principal attention, Homer intended likewiſe that we ſhould caſt a glance towards the nurſe. Accordingly, he does not mark her out merely by the name of her office; but adds an epithet to ſhew that ſhe makes no inconſiderable figure in the piece: He does not ſimply call her τιθηνη, but εὔζωνος τιθηνη. This circumſtance Mr. Pope has entirely overlooked:

Ως ειπων, ȣ παιδος ορεξατο φαιδιμος Εκτωρ.
Αψ δ' ο παϊς προς κολπον εὔζωνοιο τιθηνης
Εκλινθη ιαχων, πατρος φιλȣ σψιν ατυχθεις,
Ταρβησας χαλκον τε, ιδε λοφον ιππιοχαιτην,

Δεινον

Δεινον απ' ακροτατης κοραθος νευοντα νοησας·
Εκ δ' εγελασσε πατηρ τε φιλος, και ποτνια μητηρ.
Αυτικ' απο κρατος κορυθ' ειλετο φαιδιμος Εκτωρ,
Και την μεν κατεθηκεν επι χθονι παμφανοωσαν.
VI. 466.

Thus having ſaid, th' illuſtrious chief of Troy
Stretch'd his fond arms to claſp the lovely boy;
The babe clung crying to his nurſe's *breaſt,*
Scar'd by the dazzling helm and nodding creſt:
With ſecret pleaſure each fond parent ſmil'd,
And Hector haſted to relieve his child:
The glittering terrors *from his head unbound,*
And plac'd the beaming helmet on the ground.

I was going to object to the *glittering terrors*, in the laſt line but one; but I have already taken notice of theſe little affected expreſſions, where the ſubſtantive is ſet at variance with its attribute.

It is the obſervation of Quinctilian, that no poet ever excelled Homer in the ſublimity with which he treats great ſubjects, or in the delicacy and propriety he always diſcovers in the management of

ſmall ones. There is a paſſage in the ninth Iliad, which will juſtify the truth of the latter of theſe obſervations. When Achilles receives Ajax and Ulyſſes in his tent, who were ſent to him in the name of Agamemnon, in order to prevail with him to return to the army; Homer gives a very minute account of the entertainment, which was prepared for them upon that occaſion. It is impoſſible, perhaps, in modern language to preſerve the ſame dignity in deſcriptions of this kind, which ſo conſiderably raiſes the original: and indeed Mr. Pope warns his readers not to expect much beauty in the picture. However, a tranſlator ſhould be careful not to throw in any additional circumſtances, which may lower and debaſe the piece; which yet Mr. Pope has, in his verſion of the following line:

Πυρ Μενοιτιαδες δαιεν μεγα, ισοθεος φως.

Mean while Patroclus ſweats *the fire to raiſe.*

Own the truth, Euphronius: does not this

this give you the idea of a greaſy cook at a kitchen fire? Whereas nothing of this kind is ſuggeſted in the original. On the contrary, the epithet ἰσόθεος ſeems to have been added by Homer, in order to reconcile us to the meanneſs of the action, by reminding us of the high character of the perſon who is engaged in it: and as Mr. Addiſon obſerves of Virgil's huſbandman, that "he toſſes about his dung with an "air of gracefulneſs;" one may with the ſame truth ſay of Homer's hero, that he lights his fire with an air of dignity.

I INTENDED to have cloſed theſe haſty objections, with laying before you ſome of thoſe paſſages, where Mr. Pope ſeems to have equalled, or excelled his original. But I perceive I have already extended my letter beyond a reaſonable limit: I will reſerve therefore that more pleaſing, as well as much eaſier, taſk to ſome future occaſion. In the mean time, I deſire you will look upon theſe remarks, not as proceeding from a ſpirit of cavil, (than which

which I know not any more truly contemptible) but as an instance of my having read your favourite poet with that attention, which his own unequalled merit and your judicious recommendation most deservedly claim. I am &c.

LET-

LETTER LXV.

To PALAMEDES.

April 18, 1729.

I HAVE had occaſion a thouſand times ſince I ſaw you, to wiſh myſelf *in the land where all things are forgotten*; at leaſt, that I did not live in the memory of certain reſtleſs mortals of your acquaintance, who are viſitors by profeſſion. The misfortune is, no retirement is ſo remote, nor ſanctuary ſo ſacred, as to afford a protection from their impertinence; and tho' one were to fly to the deſart, and take refuge in the cells of ſaints and hermits, one ſhould be alarmed with their unmeaning *voice, crying* even *in the wilderneſs*. They ſpread themſelves, in truth, over the whole face of the land, and lay waſte the faireſt hours of converſation. For my own part (to ſpeak of them in a ſtyle ſuitable to their taſte and talents) I look upon them, not as paying viſits,

viſits, but *viſitations*; and am never obliged to give audience to one of this ſpecies, that I do not conſider myſelf as under a judgment for thoſe numberleſs hours, which I have ſpent in vain. If theſe ſons and daughters of idleneſs and folly would be perſuaded to enter into an excluſive ſociety among themſelves, the reſt of the world might poſſeſs their moments unmoleſted: but nothing leſs will ſatisfy them than opening a general commerce, and ſailing into every port where choice or chance may drive them. Were we to live, indeed, to the years of the antediluvians, one might afford to reſign ſome part of one's own time, in charitable relief of the inſufferable weight of theirs; but ſince the days of man are ſhrunk into a few haſty revolutions of the ſun, whole afternoons are much too conſiderable a ſacrifice to be offered up to tame civility. What heightens the contempt of this character, is, that they who have ſo much of the form, have always leaſt of the power of friendſhip: and tho' they will

graze

craze their chariot wheels (as Milton expreſſes it) to deſtroy your repoſe; they would not drive half the length of a ſtreet to aſſiſt your diſtreſs.

It was owing to an interruption from one of theſe obſequious intruders, that I was prevented keeping my engagement with you yeſterday; and you muſt indulge me in this diſcharge of my invective againſt the ridiculous occaſion of ſo mortifying a diſappointment. Adieu. I am, &c.

LET-

LETTER LXVI.

To CLYTANDER.

Sept. 10, 1718.

YOU who never forget any thing, can tell me, I dare ſay, whoſe obſervation it is, that "of all the actions "of our life nothing is more uncommon, "than to laugh or cry with a good grace". But tho' I cannot recollect the author, I ſhall always retain his maxim; as, indeed, every day's occurrences ſuggeſt the truth of it to my mind. I had particularly an occaſion to ſee one part of it verified in the treatiſe I herewith return you: for, never, ſurely, was mirth more injudiciouſly directed, than that which this writer of your acquaintance has employed. To drole upon the eſtabliſhed religion of a country, and laugh at the moſt ſacred and inviolable of her ordinances, is as far removed from good politicks, as it is from good manners. It is indeed upon maxims

of

of policy alone, that one can reaſon with thoſe who purſue the principles, which this author has embraced: I will add therefore (ſince it ſeems, you ſometimes communicate to him my letters) that to endeavour to leſſen that veneration which is due to the religious inſtitutions of a nation, when they neither run counter to any of the great lines of morality, nor oppoſe the natural rights of mankind, is a ſort of zeal which I know not by what epithet ſufficiently to ſtigmatize: It is attacking the ſtrongeſt hold of ſociety, and attempting to deſtroy the firmeſt guard of human ſecurity. Far am I, indeed, from thinking there is no other; or that the notion of a moral ſenſe is a vain and groundleſs hypotheſis. But wonderfully limited muſt the experience of thoſe philoſophers, undoubtedly, be, who imagine, that an implanted love of virtue is ſufficient to conduct the generality of mankind through the paths of moral duties, and ſuperſede the neceſſity of a farther and more powerful guide. A ſenſe of honour, likewiſe, where it operates in

its true and genuine vigour, is, I confeſs, a moſt noble and powerful principle; but far too refined a motive of action, even for the more cultivated part of our ſpecies to adopt in general: and, in fact, we find it much oftener profeſſed than purſued. Nor are the laws of a community ſufficient to anſwer all the reſtraining purpoſes of government; as there are many moral points, which it is impoſſible to ſecure by expreſs proviſions. Human inſtitutions can reach no farther than to certain general duties, in which the collective welfare of ſociety is more particularly concerned. Whatever elſe is neceſſary for the eaſe and happineſs of ſocial intercourſe, can be derived only from the aſſiſtance of religion; which influences the nicer connections and dependencies of mankind, as it regulates and corrects the heart. How many tyrannies may I exerciſe as a parent, how many hardſhips may I inflict as a maſter, if I take the ſtatutes of my country for the only guides of my actions, and think every thing lawful that is not immediately penal? The

truth is, a man may be injured in a variety of inſtances far more atrociouſly, than by what the law conſiders either as a fraud or a robbery. Now in caſes of this kind (and many very important caſes of this kind there are) to remove the bars of religion, is to throw open the gates of oppreſſion: It is to leave the honeſt, expoſed to the injurious inroads of thoſe (and they are far, perhaps, the greateſt part of mankind) who, tho' they would never *do juſtice and love mercy*, in compliance with the dictates of nature; would ſcrupulouſly practiſe both in obedience to the rules of revelation.

THE groſs of our ſpecies can never, indeed, be influenced by abſtract reaſoning, nor captivated by the naked charms of virtue: on the contrary, nothing ſeems more evident than that the generality of mankind muſt be engaged by ſenſible objects; muſt be wrought upon by their hopes and fears. And this has been the conſtant maxim of all the celebrated legiſ-

lators

lators, from the earlieſt eſtabliſhment of government, to this preſent hour. It is true indeed, that none have contended more warmly than the antients for the dignity of human nature, and the native diſpoſition of the ſoul to be enamoured with the beauty of virtue: but it is equally true, that none have more ſtrenuouſly inculcated the expediency of adding the authority of religion to the ſuggeſtions of nature, and maintaining a reverence to the appointed ceremonies of publick worſhip. The ſentiments of Pythagoras (or whoever he be who was author of thoſe verſes which paſs under that philoſopher's name) are well known upon this ſubject:

Αθανατους μεν πρωτα θεους, νομῳ ως διακειται,
Τιμα.——

MANY indeed are the antient paſſages which might be produced in ſupport of this aſſertion, if it were neceſſary to produce any paſſages of this kind to you, whom I have ſo often heard contend for the ſame truth, with all the awakening powers of learning and eloquence. Suffer

me,

me, however, for the benefit of your acquaintance, to remind you of one or two, which I do not remember ever to have ſeen quoted.

LIVY has recorded a ſpeech of Ap. Claudius Craſſus, which he made in oppoſition to certain demands of the tribunes. That zealous ſenator warmly argues againſt admitting the plebeians into a ſhare of the conſular dignity; from the power of taking the auſpices being originally and ſolely veſted in the patrician order. "But perhaps, ſays "Craſſus, I ſhall be told that the peck-"ing of a chicken, &c. are trifles un-"worthy of regard: trifling, however, as "theſe ceremonies may now be deemed, "it was by the ſtrict obſervance of them, "that our anceſtors raiſed this common-"wealth to its preſent point of grandeur!" *Parva ſunt hæc: ſed parva iſta non contemnendo, majores noſtri maximam hanc rem fecerunt.* Agreeably to this principle, the Roman hiſtorian of the life of Alexander, deſcribes that monarch, after hav-

ing killed his friend Clitus, as conſidering, in his cool moments, whether the gods had not permitted him to be guilty of that horrid act, in puniſhment for his irreligious neglect of their ſacred rites. And Juvenal [a] imputes the ſource of that torrent of vice which broke in upon the age in which he wrote, to the general diſbelief that prevailed, of the publick doctrines of their eſtabliſhed religion. Thoſe tenets, he tells us, that influenced the glorious conduct of the Curii, the Scipio's, the Fabricii, and the Camilli, were, in his days, ſo totally exploded, as ſcarce to be received even by children. It were well for ſome parts of the chriſtian world, if the ſame obſervation might not with juſtice be extended beyond the limits of antient Rome: And I often reflect upon the very judicious remark of a great writer of the laſt century, who takes notice, that "the "generality of Chriſtendom is now well-"nigh arrived at that fatal condition, "which immediately preceded the de-

[a] Sat. II. 149.

"ſtruction

" ſtruction of the worſhip of the antient
" world; when the face of religion in
" their publick aſſemblies, was quite dif-
" ferent from that apprehenſion which
" men had concerning it in private."

NOTHING, moſt certainly, could leſs plead the ſanction of reaſon, than the general rites of pagan worſhip. Weak and abſurd, however, as they were in themſelves, and indeed in the eſtimation too of all the wiſer ſort; yet the more thinking and judicious part, both of their ſtateſmen and philoſophers, unanimouſly concurred in ſupporting them as ſacred and inviolable: well perſuaded, no doubt, that religion is the ſtrongeſt cement in the great ſtructure of moral government. Farewell. I am, &c.

LETTER LXVII.

To EUPHRONIUS.

I HAVE read the performance you communicated to me, with all the attention you required; and I can with ſtrict ſincerity apply to your friend's verſes, what an antient has obſerved of the ſame number of Spartans who defended the paſſage of Thermopylæ; *nunquam vidi plures trecentos!* Never, indeed, was there greater energy of language and ſentiment united together in the ſame compaſs of lines: and it would be an injuſtice to the world, as well as to himſelf, to ſuppreſs ſo animated and ſo uſeful a compoſition.

A SATIRIST of true genius, who is warmed by a generous indignation of vice, and whoſe cenſures are conducted by candor, and truth, merits the applauſe of every friend to virtue. He may be conſidered as a ſort of ſupplement to the legiſlative

legiſlative authority of his country; as aſſiſting the unavoidable defects of all legal inſtitutions for regulating of manners, and ſtriking terror even where the divine prohibitions themſelves are held in contempt. The ſtrongeſt defence, perhaps, againſt the inroads of vice, among the more cultivated part of our ſpecies, is well-directed ridicule: They who fear nothing elſe, dread to be marked out to the contempt and indignation of the world. There is no ſucceeding in the ſecret purpoſes of diſhoneſty, without preſerving ſome ſort of credit among mankind; as there cannot exiſt a more impotent creature than a knave convict. To expoſe, therefore, the falſe pretenſions of counterfeit virtue, is to diſarm it at once of all power of miſchief, and to perform a publick ſervice of the moſt advantageous kind, in which any man can employ his time and his talents. The voice, indeed, of an honeſt ſatiriſt, is not only beneficial to the world, as giving an alarm

againſt the deſigns of an enemy ſo dangerous to all ſocial intercourſe; but as proving likewiſe the moſt efficacious preventive to others, of aſſuming the ſame character of diſtinguiſhed infamy. Few are ſo totally vitiated, as to have abandoned all ſentiments of ſhame; and when every other principle of integrity is ſurrendered, we generally find the conflict is ſtill maintained in this laſt poſt of retreating virtue. In this view therefore, it ſhould ſeem, the function of a ſatiriſt may be juſtified, notwithſtanding it ſhould be true (what an excellent moraliſt has aſſerted) that his chaſtiſements rather exaſperate, than reclaim thoſe on whom they fall. Perhaps, no human penalties are of any moral advantage to the criminal himſelf; and the principal benefit that ſeems to be derived from civil puniſhments of any kind, is their reſtraining influence upon the conduct of others.

It is not every arm, however, that is qualified to manage this formidable bow. The arrows of ſatire, when they are not pointed

pointed by virtue, as well as wit, recoil back upon the hand that directs them, and wound none but him from whom they proceed. Accordingly, Horace reſts the whole ſucceſs of writings of this ſort, upon the poet's being *Integer Ipſe*; free himſelf from thoſe immoral ſtains which he points out in others. There cannot, indeed, be a more odious, nor at the ſame time a more contemptible character than that of a vitious ſatiriſt:

Quis cælum terris non miſceat et mare cælo,
Si fur diſpliceat Verri, homicida Miloni?
Juv.

The moſt favourable light in which a cenſor of this ſpecies could poſſibly be viewed, would be that of a publick executioner, who inflicts the puniſhment on others, which he has already merited himſelf. But the truth of it is, he is not qualified even for ſo wretched an office; and there is nothing to be dreaded from a ſatiriſt of known diſhoneſty, but his applauſe. Adieu.

LETTER LXVIII.

To PALAMEDES.

Aug. 2, 1724.

CEREMONY is never more unwelcome, than at that ſeaſon in which you will probably have the greateſt ſhare of it; and as I ſhould be extremely unwilling to add to the number of thoſe who, in pure good-manners, may interrupt your enjoyments, I chooſe to give you my congratulations a little prematurely. After the happy office ſhall be compleated, your moments will be too valuable to be laid out in forms; and it would be paying a compliment with a very ill grace, to draw off your eyes from the higheſt beauty, tho' it were to turn them on the moſt exquiſite wit. I hope, however, you will give me timely notice of your wedding day, that I may be prepared with my epithalamium. I have already laid in half a dozen deities extremely proper for the occaſion,

occaſion, and have even made ſome progreſs in my firſt ſimile. But I am ſomewhat at a loſs how to proceed, not being able to determine whether your future bride is moſt like Venus or Hebe. That ſhe reſembles both, is univerſally agreed, I find, by thoſe who have ſeen her. But it would be offending, you know, againſt all the rules of poetical juſtice, if I ſhould only ſay ſhe is as handſome as ſhe is young, when after all, perhaps, the truth may be, that ſhe has even more beauty than youth. In the mean while, I am turning over all the tender compliments that love has inſpired, from the Leſbia of Catullus to the Chloe of Prior, and hope to gather ſuch a collection of flowers as may not be unworthy of entering into a garland compoſed for your Stella. But before you introduce me as a poet; let me be recommended to her by a much better title, and aſſure her that I am your, &c.

LETTER LXIX.

To PALEMON.

May 29, 1718.

I ESTEEM your letters in the number of my moſt valuable poſſeſſions, and preſerve them as ſo many prophetical leaves upon which the fate of our diſtracted nation is inſcribed. But in exchange for the maxims of a patriot, I can only ſend you the reveries of a recluſe, and give you *the ſtones of the brook* for *the gold of Ophir*. Never indeed, Palemon, was there a commerce more unequal, than that wherein you are contented to engage with me; and I could ſcarce anſwer it to my conſcience to continue a traffick, where the whole benefit accrues ſingly to myſelf; did I not know that to confer without the poſſibility of an advantage, is the moſt pleaſing exerciſe of generoſity. I will venture then to make uſe of a privilege which I have long enjoyed; as I well know you love to mix the meditations

of the philoſopher with the reflections of the ſtateſmen, and can turn with equal reliſh from the politicks of Tacitus, to the morals of Seneca.

I WAS in my garden this morning ſomewhat earlier than uſual, when the ſun, as Milton deſcribes him,

With wheels yet hov'ring o'er the ocean brim
Shot parallel to the earth his dewy ray.

There is ſomething in the opening of the dawn at this ſeaſon of the year, that enlivens the mind with a ſort of chearful ſeriouſneſs, and fills it with a certain calm rapture in the conſciouſneſs of its exiſtence. For my own part at leaſt, the riſing of the ſun has the ſame effect on me, as it is ſaid to have had on the celebrated ſtatue of Memnon: and I never obſerve that glorious luminary breaking out upon me, that I do not find myſelf harmonized for the whole day.

WHILST I was enjoying the freſhneſs and tranquillity of this early ſeaſon,

and

and conſidering the many reaſons I had to join in offering up that *morning incenſe*, which the poet I juſt now mentioned, repreſents as particularly ariſing at this hour *from the earth's great altar*; I could not but eſteem it as a principal bleſſing, that I was entering upon a new day with health and ſpirits. To awake with recruited vigour for the tranſactions of life, is a mercy ſo generally diſpenſed, that it paſſes, like other the ordinary bounties of providence, without making its due impreſſion. Yet were one never to riſe under theſe happy circumſtances, without reflecting what numbers there are, who (to uſe the language of the moſt pathetick of authors) when they ſaid *my bed ſhall comfort me, my couch ſhall eaſe my complaint*, were, like him, *full of toſſings to and fro, unto the dawning of the day*, or *ſcared with dreams and terrified thro' viſions*---Were one to conſider, I ſay, how many paſs their nights in all the horrors of a diſturbed imagination, or all the wakefulneſs of real pains, one could not find one's ſelf exempt from ſuch uneaſy ſlumbers or ſuch terrible vi-

gils,

gils, without double ſatisfaction and gratitude. There is nothing, indeed, contributes more to render a man contented with that draught of life which is poured out to himſelf, than thus to reflect on thoſe more bitter ingredients, which are ſometimes mingled in the cup of others.

In purſuing the ſame vein of thought, I could not but congratulate myſelf, that I had no part in that turbulent drama, which was going to be re-acted upon the great ſtage of the world; and rejoiced that it was my fortune to ſtand a diſtant and unengaged ſpectator of thoſe ſeveral characters that would ſhortly fill the ſcene. This ſuggeſted to my remembrance a paſſage in the Roman tragick poet, where he deſcribes the various purſuits of the buſy and ambitious world, in very juſt and lively colours:

Ille ſuperbos aditus regum
Duraſque fores, expers ſomni,
Colit: Hic nullo fine beatus
Componit opes, gazis inhians,

Et

Et congeſto pauper in auro eſt.
Illum populi favor attonitum,
Fluctuque magis mobile vulgus,
Aura tumidum tollit inani.
Hic clamoſi rabioſa fori
Jurgia vendens improbus, iras
Et verba locat.——

and I could not forbear ſaying to myſelf in the language of the ſame author,

— me mea tellus
Lare ſecreto tutoque tegat!

Yet this circumſtance, which your friend conſiders as ſo valuable a privilege, has been eſteemed by others as the moſt ſevere of afflictions. The celebrated count de Buſſy Rabutin has written a little treatiſe, wherein, after having ſhewn that the greateſt men upon the ſtage of the world are generally the moſt unhappy; he cloſes the account by producing himſelf as an inſtance of the truth of what he has been advancing. But can you gueſs, Palemon, what this terrible diſaſter was, which thus entitled him to a rank

in

in the number of theſe unfortunate heroes? He had compoſed, it ſeems, certain ſatirical pieces which gave offence to Louis the XIVth; for which reaſon that monarch baniſh'd him from the ſlavery and dependance of a court, to live in eaſe and freedom at his country houſe. But the world had taken too ſtrong poſſeſſion of his heart, to ſuffer him to leave even the worſt part of it without reluctance; and, like the patriarch's wife, he looked back with regret upon the ſcene from which he was kindly driven, tho' there was nothing in the proſpect but flames. Adieu. I am, &c.

LET-

LETTER LXX.

To EUPHRONIUS.

Aug. 20, 1722.

SURELY, Euphronius, the ſpirit of criticiſm has ſtrangely poſſeſſed you. How elſe could you be willing to ſtep aſide ſo often from the amuſements of the gayeſt ſcenes, in order to examine with me certain beauties, far other than thoſe which at preſent, it might be imagined, would wholly engage your attention? Who, indeed, that ſees my friend overnight ſupporting the vivacity of the moſt ſprightly aſſemblies, would expect to find him the next morning gravely poring over antiquated Greek, and weighing the merits of antient and modern geniuſes? But I have long admired you as an elegant *Spectator formarum*, in every ſenſe of the expreſſion; and you can turn, I know, from the charms of beauty to thoſe of wit,

wit, hath the ſame refinement of taſte and rapture. I may venture, therefore, to reſume our critical correſpondence without the form of an apology; as it is the ſingular character of Euphronius, to reconcile the philoſopher with the man of the world, and judiciouſly divide his hours between action and retirement.

WHAT has been ſaid of a celebrated French tranſlator, may with equal juſtice be applied to Mr. Pope, "that it is doubtful whether the dead or the living are "moſt obliged to him." His tranſlations of his Homer, imitations of Horace, have introduced to the acquaintance of the Engliſh reader, two the moſt conſiderable authors in all antiquity; as indeed they are equal to the credit of ſo many original works. A man muſt have a very conſiderable ſhare of the different ſpirit which diſtinguiſhes thoſe moſt admirable of poets, who is capable of repreſenting in his own language, ſo

true an image of their reſpective *manners*. If we look no farther than theſe works themſelves, without conſidering them with reſpect to any attempts of the ſame nature which have been made by others, we ſhall have ſufficient reaſon to eſteem them for their own intrinſick merit. But how will this uncommon genius riſe in our admiration, when we compare his claſſical tranſlations with thoſe ſimilar performances, which have employed ſome of the moſt celebrated of our poets? I have lately been turning over the Iliad with this view; and, perhaps, it will be no unentertaining amuſement to you, to examine the ſeveral copies which I have collected of the original, as taken by ſome of the moſt conſiderable of our Engliſh maſters. To ſingle them out for this purpoſe according to the order of the particular books, or paſſages, upon which they have reſpectively exerciſed their pencils, the pretenſions of Mr. Tickel ſtand firſt to be examined.

THE action of the Iliad opens, you know, with the ſpeech of Chryſes, whoſe daughter having been taken captive by the Grecians, was allotted to Agamemnon. This venerable prieſt of Apollo is repreſented as addreſſing himſelf to the Grecian chiefs, in the following pathetick ſimplicity of eloquence;

Ατρειδαι τε, και αλλοι ευκνημιδες Αχαιοι,
Υμιν μεν θεοι δοιεν, ολυμπια δωματ' εχοντες,
Εκπερσαι Πριαμοιο πτολιν, ευ δ' οικαδ' ικεσθαι·
Παιδα δε μοι λυσαιτε φιλην, τα δ' αποινα δεχεσθε,
Αζομενοι Διος υιον εκηβολον Απολλωνα. I. 17.

Great Atreus' ſons, and warlike Greece, attend.
So may th' immortal gods your cauſe defend,
So may you Priam's lofty bulwarks burn,
And rich in gather'd ſpoils to Greece return,
As, for theſe gifts, my daughter you beſtow,
And rev'rence due to great Apollo ſhew,
Jove's fav'rite offspring, terrible in war,
Who ſends his ſhafts unerring from afar.

TICKEL.

That affecting tenderneſs of the father which Homer has mark'd out by the melancholy flow of the line, as well as by the endearing expreſſion of,

Παιδα δε μοι λυσαιτε φιλην ——

is entirely loſt by Mr. Tickel. When Chryſes coldly mentions his daughter, without a ſingle epithet of concern or affection, he ſeems much too indifferent himſelf to move the audience in his favour. But the whole paſſage, as it ſtands in Mr. Pope's Iliad, is in general animated with a far more lively ſpirit of poetry. Who can obſerve the moving poſture of ſupplication in which he has drawn the venerable old prieſt, ſtretching out his arms in all the affecting warmth of intreaty, without ſharing in his diſtreſs and melting into pity?

Ye kings and warriors! may your vows be
crown'd,
And Troy's proud walls lie level with the
ground:
May Jove reſtore you when your toils are o'er,
Safe to the pleaſures of your native ſhore:

But

But oh! relieve a wretched parent's pain,
And give Chryseïs to these arms again.
If mercy fail, yet let my presents move,
And dread avenging Phœbus, son of Jove.

POPE.

The insinuation with which Chryses closes his speech, that the Grecians must expect the indignation of Apollo would pursue them, if they rejected the petition of his priest, is happily intimated by a single epithet:

And dread avenging *Phœbus*——

whereas the other translator takes the compass of three lines, to express the same thought less strongly.

WHEN the heralds are sent by Agamemnon to Achilles, in order to demand Briseïs; that chief is prevailed upon to part with her: and accordingly directs Patroclus to deliver up that contested beauty, into their hands:

—— Πατροκλος δε φιλω επεπειθεθ' εταιρω,
Εκ δ' αγαγε κλισιης Βρισηϊδα καλλιπαρηον,

Δωκε δ' αγειν· τω δ' αυτις ιτην παρα νηας Αχαιων.
Η δ' αεκαζ' αμα τοισι γυνη κιεν— I. 345.

The beauty of Chryſeïs, as deſcribed in theſe lines, together with the reluctance with which ſhe is here repreſented as forced from her lord, cannot but touch the reader in a very ſenſible manner. Mr. Tickel, however, has debaſed this affecting picture, by the moſt unpoetical and familiar diction. I will not delay you with making my objections in form to his language; but have diſtinguiſhed the exceptionable expreſſions, in the lines themſelves:

——*Patroclus* his dear friend *oblig'd*,
And uſher'd in *the lovely weeping maid*,
Sore ſigh'd ſhe, *as the heralds took her hand*,
And oft look'd back ſlow-moving o'er the ſtrand.
TICKEL.

Our Britiſh Homer has reſtored this piece, to its original grace and delicacy:

Patroclus now th'unwilling beauty brought:
She, in ſoft ſorrows, and in penſive thought,
Paſs'd

Paſs'd ſilent, as the heralds held her hand,
And oft look'd back ſlow-moving o'er the
ſtrand. POPE.

THE tumultuous behaviour of Achilles, as deſcribed by Homer in the lines immediately following, afford a very pleaſing and natural contraſt to the more compoſed and ſilent ſorrow of Briſeïs. The poet repreſents that hero as ſuddenly ruſhing out from his tent, and flying to the ſea-ſhore, where he gives vent to his indignation; and in bitterneſs of ſoul complains to Thetis, not only of the diſhonour brought upon him by Agamemnon, but of the injuſtice even of Jupiter himſelf:

——αυταρ Αχιλλευς
Δακρυσας, εταρων αφαρ εζετο νοσφι λιαθεις,
Θιν' εφ' αλος πολιης, οροων επι οινοπα πουτον.
Πολλα δε μητρι φιλη ηρησαθο χειρας ορεγνυς,
&c. I. 348.

Mr. Tickel in rendering the ſenſe of theſe lines, has riſen into a ſomewhat higher flight of poetry than uſual. However, you will obſerve his expreſſion in one or two

places is exceedingly languid and profaical; as the epithet which he has given to the waves, is highly injudicious. *Curling billows* might be very proper in describing a calm, but suggests too pleasing an image to be applied to the ocean when represented as *black with storms*.

The widow'd hero, when the fair was gone,
Far from his friends sate bath'd in tears, alone.
On the cold beach he sate, and fix'd his eyes
Where black with storms the curling *billows rise,*
And as the sea wide-rolling he survey'd,
With out-stretch'd arms to his fond mother pray'd.

TICKEL.

Mr. Pope has opened the thought in these lines with great dignity of numbers, and exquisite propriety of imagination; as the additional circumstances which he has thrown in, are so many beautiful improvements upon his author:

Not so his loss the fierce Achilles bore:
But sad retiring to the sounding shore,

O'er

O'er the wild margin of the deep he hung,
That kindred deep from which his mother sprung:
Then bath'd in tears of anger and disdain,
Thus loud lamented to the stormy main. POPE.

APOLLO having sent a plague among the Grecians, in resentment of the injury done to his priest Chryses by detaining his daughter; Agamemnon consents that Chryseïs shall be restored. Accordingly, a ship is fitted out under the command of Ulysses, who is employed to conduct the damsel to her father. That hero and his companions being arrived at Chrysa, the place to which they were bound, deliver up their charge; and having performed a sacrifice to Apollo, set sail early the next morning for the Grecian camp. Upon this occasion Homer exhibits to us a most beautiful sea-piece;

Ημος δ' ηελιος κατεδυ, και επι κνεφας ηλθε,
Δη τοτε κοιμησαντο παρα πρυμνησια νηος.
Ημος δ' ηριγενεια φανη ροδοδακτυλος Ηως,
Και τοτ' επειτ' αναγοντο μετα στρατον ευρυν Αχαιων.
Τοισιν δ' ικμενον ουρον ιει εκαεργος Απολλων.

Οι

Οι δ' ισον εησαν' ανα δ' ιστια λευκα πετασαν·
Εν δ' ανεμω πρησεν μεσον ιστιον, αμφι δε κυμα
Στειρη πορφυρεον μεγαλ' ιαχε, νηι δ' ιθυς
Η δ' εθεεν κατα κυμα διαπρησσουσα κελευθα.

I. 475.

If there is any paſſage throughout Mr. Tickel's tranſlation of this book, which has the leaſt pretence to ſtand in competition with Mr. Pope's verſion; it is undoubtedly that which correſponds with the Greek lines juſt now quoted. It would indeed be an inſtance of great partiality not to acknowledge, they breathe the true ſpirit of poetry; and I muſt own myſelf at a loſs which to prefer upon the whole: tho' I think Mr. Pope is evidently ſuperior to his rival, in his manner of opening the deſcription:

At ev'ning thro' the ſhore diſpers'd they ſleep,
Huſh'd by the diſtant roarings of the deep.
When now, aſcending from the ſhades of night
Aurora glow'd in all her roſy light,
The daughter of the dawn: th' awaken'd crew
Back to the Greeks encamp'd their courſe renew.

The

The breezes freſhen: for with friendly gales
Apollo ſwell'd their wide-diſtended ſails:
Cleft by the rapid prow the waves divide,
And in hoarſe murmurs break on either ſide.

TICKEL.

'Twas night: the chiefs beſide their veſſel lie,
Till roſy morn had purpled o'er the ſky:
Then launch, and hoiſe the maſt; indulgent gales,
Supply'd by Phœbus, fill the ſwelling ſails;
The milk-white canvas bellying as they blow,
The parted ocean foams and roars below:
Above the bounding billows ſwift they flew,
&c. POPE.

THERE is ſomething wonderfully pleaſing in that judicious pauſe, which Mr. Pope has placed at the beginning of theſe lines. It neceſſarily awakens the attention of the reader, and gives a much greater air of ſolemnity to the ſcene, than if the circumſtance of the time had been leſs diſtinctly pointed out, and blended, as in Mr. Tickel's tranſlation, with the reſt of the deſcription.

HOMER

HOMER has been celebrated by antiquity, for thoſe ſublime images of the ſupreme being which he ſo often raiſes in the Iliad. It is Macrobius, if I remember right, who informs us, that Phidias being aſk'd from whence he took the idea of his celebrated ſtatue of Olympian Jupiter, acknowledged that he had heated his imagination by the following lines:

Η, και κυανεησιν επ' οφρυσι νευσε Κρονιων·
Αμβροσιαι δ' αρα χαιται επερρωσαντο ανακτος
Κρατος απ' αθανατοιο· μεγαν δ' ελελιξεν ολυμπον. Il. 528.

But whatever magnificence of imagery Phidias might diſcover in the original; the Engliſh reader will ſcarce, I imagine, conceive any thing very grand and ſublime from the following copy:

This ſaid, his kingly brow the ſire inclin'd,
The large black curls fell awful from behind,
Thick ſhadowing the ſtern forehead of the god:
Olympus trembled at th' almighty nod.

TICKEL.

That

That our modern ſtatuaries, however, may not have an excuſe for burleſquing the figure of the great father of gods and men, for want of the benefit of ſo animating a model; Mr. Pope has preſerved it to them in all its original majeſty:

He ſpoke, and awful bends his ſable brows;
Shakes his ambroſial curls and gives the nod;
The ſtamp of fate, and ſanction of the god:
High heav'n with trembling the dread ſignal took,
And all Olympus to the centre ſhook. POPE.

I TOOK occaſion in a former letter, to make ſome exceptions to a paſſage or two in the parting of Hector and Andromache, as tranſlated by your favourite poet. I ſhall now produce a few lines from the ſame beautiful epiſode for another purpoſe, and in order to ſhew, with how much more maſterly a hand even than Dryden himſelf, our great improver of Engliſh poetry has worked upon the ſame ſubject.

As Andromache is going to the tower of Ilion, in order to take a view of the

field

field of battle, Hector meets her, together with her ſon the young Aſtyanax, at the Scæan gate. The circumſtances of this ſudden interview are finely imagined. Hector in the firſt tranſport of his joy is unable to utter a ſingle word, at the ſame time that Andromache tenderly embracing his hands, burſts out into a flood of tears:

Ἤτοι ὁ μὲν μειδήσεν ἰδὼν ἐς παῖδα σιωπῇ·
Ἀνδρομάχη δέ οἱ ἄγχι παρίστατο δακρυχέουσα,
Εἶσε δέ οἱ φυ χειρί, ἔπος τ' ἔφατ' ἐκ τ' ὀνόμαζε.
VI. 404.

Dryden has tranſlated this paſſage with a cold and unpoetical fidelity to the mere letter of the original:

Hector beheld him with a ſilent ſmile,
His tender wife ſtood weeping by the while,
Preſs'd in her own his warlike hand ſhe took,
Then ſigh'd, and thus prophetically ſpoke.
DRYDEN.

But Pope has judiciouſly taken a larger compaſs, and by heightening the piece with

with a few additional touches, has wrought it up in all the affecting ſpirit of tenderneſs and poetry:

Silent the warrior ſmil'd, and pleas'd reſign'd
To tender paſſions all his mighty mind:
His beauteous princeſs caſt a mournful look,
Hung on his hand, and then dejected ſpoke;
Her boſom labour'd with a boding ſigh,
And the big tear ſtood trembling in her eye.
POPE.

Andromache afterwards endeavours to perſuade Hector to take upon himſelf the defence of the city, and not hazard a life ſo important, ſhe tells him, to herſelf and his ſon, in the more dangerous action of the field:

Την δ' αυτε προσεειπε μεγας κορυθαιολ Εκτωρ·
Η και εμοι ταδε παντα μελει, γυναι· αλλα μαλ' αινως
Αιδεομαι Τρωας και Τρωαδας ελκεσιπεπλους,
Αικε, κακος ως, νοσφιν αλυσκαζω πολεμοιο.
VI. 440.

To whom the noble Hector thus reply'd:
That and the reſt are in my daily care;
But ſhould I ſhun the dangers of the war,
With

With ſcorn the Trojans would reward my pains,
And their proud ladies with their ſweeping trains:
The Grecian ſwords and lances I can bear:
But loſs of honour is my only care. DRYD.

Nothing can be more flat and unanimated than thoſe lines. One may ſay upon this occaſion, what Dryden himſelf, I remember, ſomewhere obſerves, that a good poet is no more like himſelf in a dull tranſlation, than his dead carcaſe would be to his living body. To catch indeed the ſoul of our Grecian bard, and breathe his ſpirit into an Engliſh verſion, ſeems to have been a privilege reſerved ſolely for Pope:

The chief reply'd: That poſt ſhall be my care;
Nor that alone, but all the works of war.
How would the ſons of Troy, in arms renown'd,
And Troy's proud dames, whoſe garments ſweep the ground,
Attaint the luſtre of my former name,
Should Hector baſely quit the fields of fame?
POPE.

In the farther prosecution of this episode, Hector prophesies his own death, and the destruction of Troy; to which he adds, that Andromache should be led captive into Argos, where, among other disgraceful offices, which he particularly enumerates, she should be employed, he tells her, in the servile task of drawing water. The different manner in which this last circumstance is expressed by our two English poets, will afford the strongest instance, how much additional force the same thought will receive from a more graceful turn of phrase:

Or from deep wells the living stream to take,
And on thy weary shoulders bring it back.
DRYDEN.

——— *or bring*
The weight of waters *from Hyperia's spring.*
POPE.

It is in certain peculiar turns of diction, that the language of poetry is principally distinguished from that of prose; as indeed the same words are, in general, com-

mon to them both. It is in a turn of this kind, that the beauty of the laſt quoted line conſiſts. For the whole grace of the expreſſion would vaniſh, if, inſtead of the two ſubſtantives which are placed at the beginning of the verſe, the poet had employed the more common ſyntax of a ſubſtantive with its adjective.

When this faithful pair have taken their final adieu of each other; Hector returns to the field of battle, at the ſame time that the diſconſolate Andromache joins her maidens in the palace. Homer deſcribes this circumſtance in the following tender manner:

Ως αρα φωνησας κορυθ' ειλετο φαιδιμος Εκτωρ
Ιππουριν· αλοχος δε φιλη οικονδε βεβηκει
Εντροπαλιζομενη, θαλερον κατα δακρυ χεουσα.
Αψορροον δ' επεθ' ικανε δομους ευ ναιεταοντας
Εκτορος ανδροφονοιο· κιχησατο δ' ενδοθι πολλας
Αμφιπολους, τησιν δε γοον πασησιν ενωρσεν.
Αι μεν ετι ζωον γοον Εκτορα ωι ενι οικωι. VI. 494.

I will make no remarks upon the different ſucceſs of our two celebrated poets in tranſlating

tranſlating this paſſage, but after having laid both before you, leave their verſions to ſpeak for themſelves. The truth is, the diſparity between them is much too viſible to require any comment to render it more obſervable:

At this for new replies he did not ſtay,
But lac'd his creſted helm, and ſtrode away.
His lovely conſort to her houſe return'd,
And looking often back, in ſilence mourn'd:
Home when ſhe came her ſecret woe ſhe vents,
And fills the palace with her loud laments.
Thoſe loud laments her echoing maids reſtore,
And Hector, yet alive, as dead deplore.

DRYDEN.

Thus having ſaid, the glorious chief reſumes
His tow'ry helmet, black with ſhading plumes.
His princeſs parts with a prophetick ſigh,
Unwilling parts, and oft reverts her eye
That ſtream'd at ev'ry look: then moving ſlow,
Sought her own palace, and indulg'd her woe.
There, while her tears deplor'd the godlike man,
Thro' all the train the ſoft infection ran;

The pious maids their mingled ſorrow ſhed,
And mourn the living Hector as the dead.
POPE.

As I purpoſe to follow Mr. Pope thro' thoſe ſeveral parts of the Iliad, where any of our diſtinguiſhed poets have gone before him; I muſt lead you on till we come to the ſpeech of Sarpedon to Glaucus, in the XIIth Book.

Γλαυκε, τιη δη νωϊ τετιμημεθα μαλιστα
Εδρη τε, κρεασιν τε, ιδε πλειοις δεπαεσσιν,
Εν Λυκιη, παντες δε, θεης ως, εισορωσι,
Και τεμενος νεομεθα μεγαξ ανθοιο παρ' οχθας,
Καλον, Φυταλιης και αρουρης πυροφοροιο;
Τω νυν χρη Λυκιοισι μετα πρωτοισιν εοντας,
Εσαμεν, ηδε μαχης καυστειρης αντιβολησαι·
Οφρα τις ωδ' ειπη Λυκιων πυκα θωρηκτάων,
Ου μαν ακλειεις Λυκιην καταναιετουσιν
Ημετεροι βασιληες, εδουσι τε πιονα μηλα,
Οινον τ' εξαιτον, μελιηδεα· αλλ' αρα και ις
Εσθλη, επει Λυκιοισι μετα πρωτοισι μαχονται.
Ω πεπον, ει μεν γαρ πολεμον περι τονδε φυγοντες
Αιει δη μελλοιμεν αγηρω τ' αθανατω τε
Εσσεσθ', ουτε κεν αυτος ενι πρωτοισι μαχοιμην,

Ουτε

Ουτε κε σε τελλομαι μαχην ες κυδιανειραν
Νυν δ' (εμπης γαρ κηρες εφεστασιν θανατοιο
Μυριαι, ας ουκ εστι φυγειν βροτον, ουδ' υπαλυξαι)
Ιομεν· η τω ευχος ορεξομεν, η τις ημιν.
XII. 310.

THIS ſpirited ſpeech has been tranſlated by the famous author of Cooper's Hill:

Above the reſt why is our pomp and pow'r?
Our flocks, our herds, and our poſſeſſions more?
Why all the tributes land and ſea affords,
Heap'd in great chargers, load our ſumptuous boards?
Our chearful gueſts carouſe the ſparkling tears
Of the rich grape, whilſt muſick charms their ears.
Why as we paſs do thoſe on Xanthus ſhore
As gods behold us, and as gods adore?
But that, as well in danger as degree,
We ſtand the firſt: that, when our Lycians ſee
Our brave examples, they admiring ſay,
Behold our gallant leaders! Theſe are they
Deſerve their greatneſs, and unenvy'd ſtand;
Since what they act tranſcends what they command.

Could the declining of this fate, oh! friend,
Our date to immortality extend,
Or if death ſought not them, who ſeek not death,
Would I advance? or ſhould my vainer breath
With ſuch a glorious folly thee inſpire?
But ſince with fortune nature does conſpire;
Since age, diſeaſe, or ſome leſs noble end,
Tho' not leſs certain, does our days attend;
Since 'tis decreed, and to this period lead
A thouſand ways, the nobleſt path we'll tread;
And bravely on, till they or we, or all
A common ſacrifice to honour fall.

DENHAM.

Mr. POPE paſſes ſo high an encomium on theſe lines, as to aſſure us, that if his tranſlation of the ſame paſſage has any ſpirit, it is in ſome degree due to them. It is certain they have great merit, conſidering the ſtate of our Engliſh verſification when Denham flouriſhed: but they will by no means ſupport Mr. Pope's compliment, any more than they will bear to ſtand in competition with his numbers.

numbers. And I dare ſay you will join with me in the ſame opinion, when you conſider the following verſion of this animated ſpeech:

Why boaſt we, Glaucus, our extended reign,
Where Xanthus' ſtreams enrich the Lycian plain?
Our num'rous herds that range the fruitful field,
And hills where vines their purpled harveſt yield?
Our foaming bowls with purer nectar crown'd,
Our feaſts enhanc'd with muſick's ſprightly ſound?
Why on theſe ſhores are we with joy ſurvey'd,
Admir'd as heroes, and as gods obey'd?
Unleſs great acts ſuperior merit prove,
And vindicate the bounteous pow'rs above;
That when with wond'ring eyes our martial bands
Behold our deeds tranſcending our commands,
Such, they may cry, deſerve the ſov'reign ſtate,
Whom thoſe that envy dare not imitate.

Could all our care elude the gloomy grave,
Which claims no leſs the fearful than the brave,
For luſt of fame I ſhould not vainly dare
In fighting fields, nor urge thy ſoul to war.
But ſince, alas! ignoble age muſt come,
Diſeaſe and death's inexorable doom;
The life, which others pay, let us beſtow,
And give to fame what we to nature owe;
Brave tho' we fall, and honour'd if we live,
Or let us glory gain, or glory give!

POPE.

IF any thing can be juſtly objected to this tranſlation, it is, perhaps, that in one or two places it is too diffuſed and deſcriptive for that agitation in which it was ſpoken. In general, however, one may venture to aſſert, that it is warmed with the ſame ardour of poetry and heroiſm that glows in the original; as thoſe ſeveral thoughts, which Mr. Pope has intermixed of his own, naturally ariſe out of the ſentiments of his author, and are perfectly conformable to the character and circumſtances of the ſpeaker.

I SHALL

I SHALL close this review, with Mr. Congreve; who has translated the petition of Priam to Achilles for the body of his son Hector, together with the lamentations of Andromache, Hecuba, and Helen.

HOMER represents the unfortunate king of Troy, as entering unobserved into the tent of Achilles; and illustrates the surprize which arose in that chief and his attendants, upon their first discovery of Priam, by the following simile:

Ως δ' οταν ανδρ' ατη πυκινη λαβη, ος τ' ενι πατρη
Φωτα κατακτεινας αλλον εξικετο δημον,
Ανδρος ες αφνειου, θαμβος δ' εχει εισοροωντας·
Ως Αχιλευς θαμβησεν, ιδων Πριαμον θειοειδεα.
XXIV. 480.

NOTHING can be more languid and inelegant, than the manner in which Congreve has rendered this passage:

But as a wretch who has a murder done,
And seeking refuge does from justice run;

Entring

Entring ſome houſe, in haſte, where he's unknown,
Creates amazement in the lookers on:
So did Achilles gaze, ſurpriz'd to ſee
The godlike Priam's royal miſery. CONG.

But Pope has rais'd the ſame thought with his uſual grace and ſpirit:

As when a wretch, who, conſcious of his crime,
Purſu'd for murder flies his native clime,
Juſt gains ſome frontier, breathleſs, pale, amaz'd!
All gaze, all wonder: thus Achilles gaz'd.
POPE.

THE ſpeech of Priam is wonderfully pathetick and affecting. He tells Achilles, that out of fifty ſons, he had one only remaining; and of him he was now unhappily bereaved, by his ſword. He conjures him by his tenderneſs for his own father to commiſerate the moſt wretched of parents, who by an uncommon ſeverity of fate, was thus obliged to kiſs thoſe hands which were imbrued in the blood of his children:

—TH

—τϑ νυν εινεχ' ικανω νηας Αχαιων,
Λυσομενος παρα σειο, φερω δ' απερεισι' αποινα.
Αλλα αιδειο Ζευς, Αχιλευ, αυτον τ' ελεησον,
Μνησαμενος σϑ πατρος· εγω δ' ελεεινοτερος περ,
Ετλην δ', οι πω τις επιχθονιος βροτος αλλος,
Ανδρος παιδοφονοιο ποτι στομα χειρ' ορεγεσϑαι.
501.

THESE moving lines Mr. Congreve has debaſed into the loweſt and moſt unaffecting proſe:

For his ſake only hither am I come;
Rich gifts I bring, and wealth, an endleſs ſum;
All to redeem that fatal prize you won,
A worthleſs ranſom for ſo brave a ſon.
Fear the juſt gods, Achilles, and on me
With pity look, think you your father ſee:
Such as I am, he is; alone in this,
I can no equal have in miſeries;
Of all mankind moſt wretched and forlorn,
Bow'd with ſuch weight as never has been borne;
Reduc'd to kneel and pray to you, from whom
The ſpring and ſource of all my ſorrows come;

With

With gifts to court mine and my country's bane,
And kiss those hands which have my children slain. CONGREVE.

Nothing could compensate the trouble of labouring through these heavy and tasteless rhimes, but the pleasure of being relieved at the end of them with a more lively prospect of poetry:

For him thro' hostile camps I bent my way,
For him thus prostrate at thy feet I lay;
Large gifts proportion'd to thy wrath I bear;
O hear the wretched, and the gods revere!
Think of thy father, and this face behold!
See him in me, as helpless and as old!
Tho' not so wretched: there he yields to me,
The first of men in sov'reign misery;
Thus forc'd to kneel, thus grov'ling to embrace
The scourge and ruin of my realm and race:
Suppliant my children's murd'rer to implore,
And kiss those hands yet reeking with their gore. POPE.

ACHILLES having at length consented to restore the dead body of Hector, Priam conducts it to his palace. It is there placed

placed in funeral pomp, at the ſame time that mournful dirges are ſung over the corpſe, intermingled with the lamentations of Andromache, Hecuba, and Helen:

——τον μεν επειτα
Τρητοις εν λεχεεσσι θεσαν, παρα δ' εισαν αοιδους,
Θρηνων εξαρχους, οιτε στονοεσσαν αοιδην
Οι μεν αρ' εθρηνεον, επι δε στεναχοντο γυναικες.

℣ 719.

There is ſomething extremely ſolemn and affecting, in Homer's deſcription of this ſcene of ſorrow: a tranſlator, who was touch'd with the leaſt ſpark of poetry, could not, one ſhould imagine, but riſe beyond himſelf, in copying after ſo noble an original. It has not, however, been able to elevate Mr. Congreve above his uſual flatneſs of numbers:

—— then laid
With care the body on a ſumptuous bed,
And round about were ſkilful ſingers plac'd,
Who wept and ſigh'd, and in ſad notes expreſs'd
Their moan: All in a chorus did agree
Of univerſal, mournful harmony.

CONGREVE.

IT

IT would be the higheſt injuſtice to the following lines to quote them in oppoſition to thoſe of Mr. Congreve: I produce them, as marked with a vein of poetry much ſuperior even to the original:

They weep, and place him on a bed of ſtate.
A melancholy choir attend around
With plaintive ſighs, and muſick's ſolemn ſound:
Alternately they ſing, alternate flow
Th'obedient tears, melodious in their woe;
While deeper ſorrows groan from each full heart,
And nature ſpeaks at ev'ry pauſe of art.

POPE.

THUS, Euphronius, I have brought before you ſome of the moſt renowned of our Britiſh bards, contending, as it were, for the prize of poetry: And there can be no debate to whom it juſtly belongs. Mr. Pope ſeems, indeed, to have raiſed our numbers to the higheſt poſſible perfection

fection of ſtrength and harmony: and, I fear, all the praiſe that the beſt ſucceeding poets can expect, as to their verſification, will be, that they have happily imitated his manner. Farewell. I am, &c.

LET-

LETTER LXXI.

To the ſame.

July 17, 1739.

IF the temper and turn of Timanthes had not long prepared me for what has happened, I ſhould have received your account of his death with more ſurprize: but I ſuſpected from our earlieſt acquaintance, that his ſentiments and diſpoſition would lead him into a ſatiety of life, much ſooner than nature would probably carry him to the end of it. When unſettled principles fall in with a conſtitutional gloomineſs of mind, it is no wonder the *tædium vitæ* ſhould gain daily ſtrength, till it puſhes a man to ſeek relief againſt this moſt deſperate of all diſtempers, from the point of a ſword, or the bottom of a river.

But to learn to accommodate our taſte to that portion of happineſs which providence has ſet before us, is of all the leſ-

ſons

ſons of philoſophy ſurely the moſt neceſſary. High and exquiſite gratifications are not conſiſtent with the appointed meaſures of humanity: and, perhaps, if we would fully enjoy the reliſh of our being, we ſhould rather conſider the miſeries we eſcape, than too nicely examine the intrinſick worth of the happineſs we poſſeſs. It is, at leaſt, the buſineſs of true wiſdom to bring together every circumſtance, which may light up a flame of chearfulneſs in the mind: and tho' we muſt be inſenſible if it ſhould perpetually burn with the ſame unvaried brightneſs; yet prudence ſhould preſerve it as a ſacred fire, which is never to be totally extinguiſhed.

I AM perſuaded this diſguſt of life, is frequently indulged out of a principle of mere vanity. It is eſteemed as a mark of uncommon refinement, and as placing a man above the ordinary level of his ſpecies, to ſeem ſuperior to the vulgar feelings of happineſs. True good-ſenſe, however, moſt certainly conſiſts, not in deſpiſing, but in managing, our ſtock of life to the beſt advantage; as a chearful ac-

 quieſcence

quieſcence in the meaſures of providence, is one of the ſtrongeſt ſymptoms of a well-conſtituted mind. Self-wearineſs is a circumſtance that ever attends folly; and to contemn our being, is the greateſt, and indeed the peculiar, infirmity of human nature. It is a noble ſentiment which Tully puts into the mouth of Cato, in his treatiſe upon old age: *Non lubet mihi* (ſays that venerable Roman) *deplorare vitam, quod multi, et ii docti, ſæpe fecerunt; neque me vixiſſe pœnitet: quoniam ita vixi, ut non fruſtra me natum exiſtimem.*

It is in the power, indeed, of but a very ſmall proportion of mankind, to act the ſame glorious part that afforded ſuch high ſatisfaction to this diſtinguiſhed patriot: but the number is yet far more inconſiderable, of thoſe, who cannot, in any ſtation, ſecure to themſelves a ſufficient fund of complacency to render life juſtly valuable. Who is it that is placed out of the reach of the higheſt of all gratifications, thoſe of the generous affections; and that cannot provide for his

own happineſs by contributing ſomething to the welfare of others? As this diſeaſe of the mind generally breaks out with moſt violence in thoſe, who are ſuppoſed to be endowed with a greater delicacy of taſte and reaſon, than is the uſual allotment of their fellow creatures; one may aſk them, whether there is any ſatiety in the purſuits of uſeful knowledge? or, if one can ever be weary of benefiting mankind? Will not the fine arts ſupply a laſting feaſt to the mind? Or can there be wanting a pleaſurable employment, ſo long as there remains even one advantageous truth to be diſcovered or confirmed? To complain that life has no joys, while there is a ſingle creature whom we can relieve by our bounty, aſſiſt by our counſels, or enliven by our preſence, is to lament the loſs of that which we poſſeſs, and is juſt as rational as to die of thirſt with the cup in our hands. But the misfortune is, when a man is ſettled into a habit of receiving all his pleaſures from the mere ſelfiſh indulgencies; he wears out of his mind the reliſh of every nobler enjoy-

ment, at the ſame time that his powers of the ſenſual kind are growing more languid by each repetition. It is no wonder therefore he ſhould fill up the meaſure of his gratifications, long before he has compleated the circle of his duration; and either wretchedly ſit down the remainder of his days in diſcontent, or raſhly throw them up in deſpair. Farewell. I am, &c.

LET-

LETTER LXXII.

To TIMOCLEA.

Oct. 1, 1719.

CERTAINLY, Timoclea, you have a paſſion for the marvellous beyond all power of gratification. There is not an adventurer throughout the whole regions of chevalry, with whom you are unacquainted; and have wander'd thro' more folios than would furniſh a decent library. Mine, at leaſt, you have totally exhauſted, and have ſo cleared my ſhelves of knights-errant, that I have not a ſingle hero remaining that ever was regaled in bower or hall. But tho' you have drained me of my whole ſtock of romance, I am not entirely unprovided for your entertainment; and have encloſed a little Grecian fable for your amuſement, which was lately tranſmitted to me by one of my friends. He diſcovered it among ſome old manu-

ſcripts, which have been long, it ſeems, in the poſſeſſion of his family: and if you will rely upon his judgment, it is a tranſlation by Spenſer's own hand. There was a ſhort dedication affixed to it, inſcribed *To the moſt vertuous and beautiful lady, the Lady Carew.* But this, my correſpondent tells me, is entirely devoured by the rats:

O! may they ne'er again digeſt
The horrors of ſo ſad a feaſt. PRIOR.

They have ſpared, however, the date, which appears to be September 1591; as the initial letters E. S. ſubſcribed at the bottom, are ſtill, it ſeems, perfectly legible.

THIS is all the hiſtory I have to give you of the following piece: the genuineneſs of which I leave to be ſettled between my friend and the criticks, and am, &c.

The

The Transformation of LYCON and EUPHORMIUS.

I.

DEEM not, ye plaintive crew, that ſuffer wrong,
Ne thou, O man! who deal'ſt the tort, miſween
The equal gods, who heav'n's ſky-manſions throng,
(Though viewleſs to the eyne they diſtant ſheen,)
Spectators reckleſs of our actions been.
Turning the volumes of grave ſages old,
Where auncient ſaws in fable may be ſeen,
This truth I fond in paynim tale enroll'd;
Which for enſample drad my muſe ſhall here unfold.

II.

What time Arcadia's flowret vallies fam'd,
Pelaſgus, firſt of monarchs old, obey'd,
There wonn'd a wight, and Lycon was he nam'd,
Unaw'd by conſcience, of no gods afraid,
Ne juſtice rul'd his heart, ne mercy ſway'd.
Some held him kin to that abhorred race
Which heav'n's high tow'rs with mad emprize aſſay'd;
And ſome his cruel lynage did ytrace
From fell Erynnis join'd in Pluto's dire embrace.

III.

But he, perdy, far other tale did feign,
And claim'd alliaunce with the ſiſters nine;
And deem'd himſelf (what deems not pride ſo vain?)
The peerleſs paragon of wit divine,
Vaunting that ev'ry foe ſhould rue its tine.
Right doughty wight! yet, ſooth, withouten ſmart,
All pow'rleſs fell the loſels ſhafts malign:
'Tis vertue's arm to wield wit's heav'nly dart,
Point its keen barb with force, and ſend it to the heart.

IV.

One only impe he had, Paſtora hight,
Whoſe ſweet amenaunce pleas'd each ſhepherd's eye:
Yet pleas'd ſhe not baſe Lycon's evil ſpright,
Tho' blame in her not malice moten 'ſpy,
Clear, without ſpot, as ſummer's cloudleſs ſky.
Hence poet's feign'd, Lycean Pan array'd
In Lycon's form, enflam'd with paſſion high,
Deceiv'd her mother in the covert glade;
And from the ſtol'n embrace yſprong the heav'nly maid.

V.

Thus fabling they: mean while the damſel fair
A ſhepherd youth remark'd, as o'er the plain
She deffly pac'd elong ſo debonair:
Seem'd ſhe as one of Dian's choſen train.

Full

Full many a fond excuſe he knew to feign,
In ſweet converſe to while with her the day,
'Till love unwares his heedleſs heart did gain.
Nor dempt he, ſimple wight, no mortal may
The blinded God once harbour'd, when he liſt, foreſay.

VI.

Now much he meditates if yet to ſpeak,
And now reſolves his paſſion to conceal:
But ſure, quoth he, my ſeely heart will break
If aye I ſmother what I aye muſt feel.
At length by hope emboldened to reveal,
The lab'ring ſecret dropped from his tong.
Whiles frequent ſingults check'd his faltring tale,
In modeſt wiſe her head Paſtora hong:
For never maid more chaſte inſpired ſhepherd's ſong.

VII.

What needs me to recount in long detail,
The tender parley which theſe lemans held:
How oft he vow'd his love her ne'er ſhould fail;
How oft the ſtream from forth her eyne out-well'd,
Doubting if conſtancy yet ever dwell'd
In heart of youthful wight: ſuffice to know,
Each riſing doubt he in her boſome quell'd.
So parted they, more blithſome both, I trow:
For rankling love conceal'd, me ſeems, is deadly woe.

VIII. *Eftſoons*

VIII.

Eftſoons to Lycon, ſwift the youth did fare,
(Lagg'd ever youth when Cupid urg'd his way?)
And ſtraight his gentle purpoſe did declare,
And ſooth the mount'naunce of his herds diſplay.
Ne Lycon meant his ſuiten to foreſay:
" Be thine, Paſtora (quoth the maſker ſly)
" And twice two thouſand ſheep her dow'r ſhall pay."
Beat then the lover's heart with joyaunce high;
Ne dempt that aught his bliſs could now betray,
Ne gueſs'd that foul deceit in Lycon's boſome lay.

IX.

So forth he yode to ſeek his rev'rend ſire;
(The good Euphormius ſhepherds him did call)
How ſweet Paſtora did his boſome fire,
Her worth, her promis'd flocks, he tolden all.
" Ah! nere, my ſon, let Lycon thee enthrall,
(Reply'd the ſage, in wiſe experience old,)
" Smooth is his tong, but full of guile withal,
" In promiſe faithleſs, and in vaunting bold:
" Ne ever lamb of his will bleat within thy fold."

X.

With words prophetick thus Euphormius ſpake:
And fact confirm'd what wiſdom thus foretold.
Full many a mean deviſe did Lycon make,
The hoped day of ſpouſal to with-hold,
Framing new trains when nought mote ſerve his old.

Nath'leſs

Nath'leſs he vow'd, Cyllene, cloud-topt hill,
Should ſooner down the lowly delve be roll'd,
Then he his plighted promiſe nould fulfill:
But when, perdy, or where, the caitive ſayen nill.

XI.

Whiles thus the tedious ſuns had journey'd round,
Ne ought mote now the lovers hearts divide,
Ne truſt was there, ne truth in Lycon found;
The maid with matron Juno for her guide,
The youth by Concord *led, in ſecret hy'd*
To Hymen's ſacred fane: The honeſt deed [ty'd.
Each god approv'd, and cloſe the bands were
Certes, till happier moments ſhould ſucceed,
No prying eyne they weened their emprize mote areed.

XII.

But prying eyne of Lycon 'twas in vain,
(Right practick in diſguiſe) to hope beware.
He trac'd their covert ſteps to Hymen's fane,
And joy'd to find them in his long-laid ſnare.
Algates, in ſemblaunt ire, he 'gan to ſwear,
And roaren loud as in diſpleaſaunce high:
Then out he hurlen forth his daughter fair,
Forlore, the houſeleſs child of miſery,
Expos'd to killing cold, and pinching penury.

XIII.

Ah! whither now ſhall ſad Paſtora wend,
To want abandon'd and by wrongs oppreſt?
Who ſhall the wretched out-caſt's teen befriend?
Lives mercy then, if not in parent's breaſt?

Yes,

Yes, MERCY *lives, the gentle goddess blest,*
At Jove's right hand, to Jove for ever dear.
Aye at his feet she pleads the cause distrest,
To sorrow's plaints she turns his equal ear,
And wafts to heav'n's star-throne fair vertue's silent tear.

XIV.

Twas SHE that bade Euphormius quell each thought,
That well mote rise to check his gen'rous aid.
Tho' high the torts which Lycon him had wrought,
Tho' few the flocks his humble pastures fed;
When as he learn'd Pastora's hapless sted,
His breast humane with wonted pity flows.
He op'd his gates, the naked exile led
Beneath his roof; a decent drapet throws
O'er her cold limbs, and sooths her undeserved woes.

XV.

Now loud tongu'd rumour bruited round the tale:
Th' astoned swains uneath could credence give,
That in Arcadia's unambitious vale,
A faytor false as Lycon e'er did live.
But Jove (who in high heav'n does mortals prive,
And ev'ry deed in golden ballance weighs)
To earth his flaming charet baden drive,
And down descends, enwrapt in peerless blaze,
To deal forth guerdon meet to good and evil ways.

XVI.

XVI.

Where Erymanthus, crown'd with many a wood,
His ſilver ſtream through daſy'd vales does lead,
Stretch'd on the flow'ry marge, in reckleſs mood,
Proud Lycon ſought by charm of jocund reed
To lull the dire remorſe of tortious deed.
Him Jove accoſts, in rev'rend ſemblaunce dight
Of good Euphormius, and 'gan mild areed
Of compact oft confirm'd, of fay yplight,
Of nature's tender tye, of ſacred rule of right.

XVII.

With lofty eyne, half loth to looke ſo low,
Him Lycon view'd, and with ſwol'n ſurquedry
'Gan rudely treat his ſacred eld: When now
Forth ſtood the god confeſt that rules the ſky,
In ſudden ſheen of drad divinity: [*ſaid,*
" *And know, falſe man,*" *the lord of thunders*
" *Not unobſerv'd by heav'n's all-perſent eye*
" *Thy cruel deeds: nor ſhall be unappay'd:*
" *Go! be in form that beſt beſeems thy thews, arrey'd.*"

XVIII.

Whiles yet he ſpake, th'affrayed trembling wight
Tranſmew'd to blatant beaſt, with hideous howl
Ruſh'd headlong forth, in well-deſerved plight,
Mid'ſt dragons, minotaurs, and fiends to prowl,
A wolf in form as erſt a wolf in ſoul!

To

To Pholoë, foreſt wild, he hy'd away,
The horrid haunt of ſavage monſters foul.
There helpleſs innocence is ſtill his prey,
Thief of the bleating fold, and ſhepherd's dire diſmay.

XIX.

Tho Jove to good Euphormius' cot did wend,
Where peaceful dwelt the man of vertue high,
Each ſhepherd's praiſe and eke each ſhepherd's friend,
In ev'ry act of ſweet humanity.
Him Jove approaching in mild majeſty,
Greeted all hail! than bade him join the throng
Of glit'rand lights that gild the glowing ſky.
There ſhepherds nightly view his orb yhong,
Where bright he ſhines eterne, the brighteſt ſtars among.

LETTER LXXIII.

To CLYTANDER.

February 8, 1719.

IF there was any thing in my former letter inconſiſtent with that eſteem which is juſtly due to the antients, I deſire to retract it in this; and diſavow every expreſſion which might ſeem to give precedency to the moderns in works of genius. I am ſo far indeed from entertaining the ſentiments you impute to me; that I have often endeavoured to account for that ſuperiority which is ſo viſible in the compoſitions of their poets: and have frequently aſſigned their religion as in the number of thoſe cauſes, which probably concurred to give them this remarkable preheminence. That enthuſiaſm which is ſo eſſential to every true artiſt in the poetical way, was conſiderably heightened and enflamed by the whole turn of their ſacred doctrines; and the fancied

preſence

preſence of their Muſes had almoſt as wonderful an effect upon their thoughts and language, as if they had been really and divinely inſpired. Whilſt all nature was ſuppoſed to ſwarm with divinities, and every oak and fountain was believed to be the reſidence of ſome preſiding deity; what wonder if the poet was animated by the imagined influence of ſuch exalted ſociety, and found himſelf tranſported beyond the ordinary limits of ſober humanity? The mind when attended only by mere mortals of ſuperior powers, is obſerved to riſe in her ſtrength; and her faculties open and enlarge themſelves when ſhe acts in the view of thoſe, for whom ſhe has conceived a more than common reverence. But when the force of ſuperſtition moves in concert with the powers of imagination, and genius is enflamed by devotion, poetry muſt ſhine out in all her brighteſt perfection and ſplendor.

WHATEVER therefore the philoſopher might think of the religion of his country; it was the intereſt of the poet

to

to be thoroughly orthodox. If he gave up his creed, he muſt renounce his numbers; and there could be no inſpiration where there were no Muſes. This is ſo true, that it is in compoſitions of the poetical kind alone, that the antients ſeem to have the principal advantage over the moderns: in every other ſpecies of writing one might venture perhaps to aſſert, that theſe latter ages have, at leaſt, equalled them. When I ſay ſo, I do not confine myſelf to the productions of our own nation, but comprehend likewiſe thoſe of our neighbours: and with that extent the obſervation will poſſibly hold true, even without an exception in favour of hiſtory and oratory.

But whatever may with juſtice be determined concerning that queſtion; it is certain, at leaſt, that the practice of all ſucceeding poets confirms the notion for which I am principally contending. Tho' the altars of paganiſm have many ages ſince been thrown down, and groves are no longer ſacred; yet the language of the

poets has not changed with the religion of the times, but the gods of Greece and Rome are ſtill adored in modern verſe. Is not this a confeſſion, that fancy is enlivened by ſuperſtition, and that the antient bards catched their rapture from the old mythology? I will own, however, that I think there is ſomething ridiculous in this unnatural adoption, and that a modern poet makes but an aukward figure with his antiquated gods. When the pagan ſyſtem was ſanctified by popular belief, a piece of machinery of that kind, as it had the air of probability, afforded a very ſtriking manner of celebrating any remarkable circumſtance, or raiſing any common one. But now that this ſuperſtition is no longer ſupported by vulgar opinion, it has loſt its principal grace and efficacy, and ſeems to be, in general, the moſt cold and unintereſting method in which a poet can work up his ſentiments. What, for inſtance, can be more unaffecting and ſpiritleſs than the compliment which Boileau has paid to Louis the XIVth on his famous paſſage over the Rhine?

Rhine? He repreſents the Naiads, you may remember, as alarming the god of that river, with an account of the march of the French monarch; upon which the river-god aſſumes the appearance of an old experienced commander, and flies to a Dutch fort, in order to exhort the garriſon to ſally out and diſpute the intended paſſage. Accordingly they range themſelves in form of battle with the Rhine at their head, who, after ſome vain efforts, obſerving Mars and Bellona on the ſide of the enemy, is ſo terrified with the view of thoſe ſuperior divinities, that he moſt gallantly runs away, and leaves the hero in quiet poſſeſſion of his banks. I know not how far this may be reliſhed by criticks, or juſtified by cuſtom; but as I am only mentioning my particular taſte, I will acknowledge, that it appears to me extremely inſipid and puerile.

I have not however ſo much of the ſpirit of Typhœus in me, as to make war upon the gods without reſtriction, and attempt to exclude them from their whole

poetical dominions. To repreſent natural, moral, or intellectual qualities and affections as perſons, and appropriate to them thoſe general emblems by which their powers and properties are uſually typified in pagan theology, may be allowed as one of the moſt pleaſing and graceful figures of poetical rhetorick. When Dryden addreſſing himſelf to the month of May as to a perſon, ſays,

For thee the Graces lead the dancing hours;

one may conſider him as ſpeaking only in metaphor: and when ſuch ſhadowy beings are thus juſt ſhewn to the imagination, and immediately withdrawn again, they certainly have a very powerful effect. But I can reliſh them no farther than as figures only: when they are extended in any ſerious compoſition beyond the limits of metaphor, and exhibited under all the various actions of real perſons; I cannot but conſider them as ſo many abſurdities which cuſtom has unreaſonably authoriſed. Thus Spenſer, in one of his paſtorals,

paſtorals, repreſents the god of love as flying, like a bird, from bough to bough. A ſhepherd, who hears a ruſtling among the buſhes, ſuppoſes it to be ſome game, and accordingly diſcharges his bow. Cupid returns the ſhot, and after ſeveral arrows had been mutually exchanged between them, the unfortunate ſwain diſcovers whom it is he is contending with; but as he is endeavouring to make his eſcape, receives a deſperate wound in the heel. This fiction makes the ſubject of a very pretty idyllium in one of the Greek poets; yet is extremely flat and diſguſting as it is adopted by our Britiſh bard. And the reaſon of the difference is plain: in the former it is ſupported by a popular ſuperſtition; whereas no ſtrain of imagination can give it the leaſt air of probability, as it is worked up by the latter:

Quodcunque mihi oſtendis ſic, incredulus odi.

HOR.

I MUST confeſs at the ſame time, that the inimitable Prior has introduced this

fabulous ſcheme with ſuch uncommon grace, and has paid ſo many genteel compliments to his miſtreſs by the aſſiſtance of Venus and Cupid, that one is carried off from obſerving the impropriety of this machinery, by the pleaſing addreſs with which he manages it: and I never read his tender poems of this kind, without applying to him what Seneca ſomewhere ſays upon a ſimilar occaſion: *Major ille eſt qui judicium abſtulit, quam qui meruit.*

To ſpeak my ſentiments in one word, I would leave the gods in full poſſeſſion of allegorical and burleſque poems: in all others I would never ſuffer them to make their appearance in perſon and as agents, but to enter only in ſimile, or alluſion. It is thus Waller, of all our poets, has moſt happily employed them; and his application of the ſtory of Daphne and Apollo will ſerve as an inſtance, in what manner the ancient mythology may be adopted with the utmoſt propriety and beauty. Adieu, I am, &c.

LET-

LETTER LXXIV.

To HORTENSIUS.

May 4, 1720.

IF the ingenious piece you communicated to me, requires any farther touches of your pencil; I muſt acknowledge the truth to be, what you are inclined to ſuſpect, that my friendſhip has impoſed upon my judgment. But though in the preſent inſtance your delicacy ſeems far too refined; yet, in general, I muſt agree with you, that works of the moſt permanent kind, are not the effects of a lucky moment, nor ſtruck out at a ſingle heat. The beſt performances, indeed, have generally coſt the moſt labour; and that eaſe, which is ſo eſſential to fine writing, has ſeldom been attained without repeated and ſevere corrections: *Ludentis ſpeciem dabit et torquebitur*, is a motto that may be applied, I believe, to moſt ſucceſsful authors of genius. With

as much facility as the numbers of the natural Prior ſeem to have flowed from him, they were the reſult (if I am not miſinformed) of much application: and a friend of mine, who undertook to tranſcribe one of the nobleſt performances of the fineſt genius that this, or perhaps any age can boaſt, has often aſſured me, that there is not a ſingle line, as it is now publiſhed, which ſtands in conformity with the original manuſcript. The truth is, every ſentiment has its peculiar expreſſion, and every word its preciſe place, which do not always immediately preſent themſelves, and generally demand frequent trials before they can be properly adjuſted; not to mention the more important difficulties, which neceſſarily occur in ſettling the plan and regulating the higher parts which compoſe the ſtructure of a finiſhed work.

THOSE indeed, who know what pangs it coſts even the moſt fertile genius to be delivered of a juſt and regular production, might be inclined, perhaps, to cry out with the moſt ancient of authors, *Oh! that mine adverſary*

adverſary had written a book! A writer of refined taſte has the continual mortification to find himſelf incapable of taking entire poſſeſſion of that ideal beauty, which warms and fills his imagination. His conceptions ſtill riſe above all the powers of his art, and he can but faintly copy out thoſe images of perfection, which are impreſſed upon his mind. Never was any thing, ſays Tully, more beautiful than the Venus of Apelles, or the Jove of Phidias; yet were they by no means equal to thoſe high notions of beauty which animated the geniuſes of thoſe wonderful artiſts. In the ſame manner, he obſerves, the great maſters of oratory, imaged to themſelves a certain perfection of eloquence, which they could only contemplate in idea, but in vain attempted to draw out in expreſſion. Perhaps no author ever perpetuated his reputation, who could write up to the full ſtandard of his own judgment: and I am perſuaded that he, who upon a ſurvey of his compoſitions can with entire complacency pronounce them good, will hardly find the world

world join with him in the ſame favourable ſentence.

THE moſt judicious of all poets, the inimitable Virgil, uſed to reſemble his productions to thoſe of that animal, who, agreeably to the notions of the ancients, was ſuppoſed to bring her young into the world, a mere rude and ſhapeleſs maſs: he was obliged to retouch them again and again, he acknowledged, before they acquired their proper form and beauty. Accordingly we are told, that after having ſpent eleven years in compoſing his Æneid, he intended to have ſet apart three more for the reviſal of that glorious performance. But being prevented by his laſt ſickneſs from giving thoſe finiſhing touches, which his exquiſite judgment conceived to be ſtill neceſſary, he directed his friends Tucca and Varius to burn the nobleſt poem that ever appeared in the Roman language. In the ſame ſpirit of delicacy Mr. Dryden tells us, that had he taken more time in tranſlating this author, he might poſſibly have ſucceeded better; but never, he aſ-

ſures us, could he have ſucceeded ſo well as to have ſatisfied himſelf.

In a word, Hortenſius, I agree with you, that there is nothing more difficult than to fill up the character of an author, who propoſes to raiſe a juſt and laſting admiration; who is not contented with thoſe little tranſient flaſhes of applauſe, which attend the ordinary race of writers, but conſiders only how he may ſhine out to poſterity; who extends his views beyond the preſent generation, and cultivates thoſe productions which are to flouriſh in future ages. What Sir William Temple obſerves of poetry, may be extended to every other work where taſte and imagination are concerned: "It "requires the greateſt contraries to com-"poſe it: a genius both penetrating and "ſolid; an expreſſion both ſtrong and de-"licate. There muſt be a great agita-"tion of mind to invent, a great calm to "judge and correct: there muſt be upon "the ſame tree, and at the ſame time, "both flower and fruit." But though I know you would not value yourſelf upon any performance, wherein theſe very op-

poſite

poſite and very ſingular qualities were not conſpicuous; yet I muſt remind you at the ſame time, that when the file ceaſes to poliſh, it muſt neceſſarily weaken. You will remember therefore, that there is a medium between the immoderate caution of that orator, who was three olympiads in writing a ſingle oration; and the extravagant expedition of that poet, whoſe funeral pile was compoſed of his own numberleſs productions. Adieu. I am, &c.

LET-

LETTER LXXV.

To ORONTES.

IT is with much pleaſure I look back upon that philoſophical week which I lately enjoyed at *** ; as there is no part, perhaps, of ſocial life, which affords more real ſatisfaction, than thoſe hours which one paſſes in rational and unreſerved converſation. The free communication of ſentiments amongſt a ſet of ingenious and ſpeculative friends, ſuch as thoſe you gave me the opportunity of meeting, throws the mind into the moſt advantageous exerciſe, and ſhews the ſtrength or weakneſs of its opinions with greater force of conviction, than any other method we can employ.

THAT *it is not good for man to be alone*, is true in more views of our ſpecies than one; and ſociety gives ſtrength to our reaſon, as well as poliſh to our manners. The ſoul, when left entirely to her own ſolitary contemplations, is inſenſibly drawn

drawn by a ſort of conſtitutional bias, which generally leads her opinions to the ſide of her inclinations. Hence it is that ſhe contracts thoſe peculiarities of reaſoning, and little *habits* of thinking, which ſo often confirm her in the moſt fantaſtical errors. But nothing is more likely to recover the mind from this falſe bent, than the counter-warmth of impartial debate. Converſation opens our views, and gives our faculties a more vigorous play; it puts us upon turning our notions on every ſide, and holds them up to a light that diſcovers thoſe latent flaws, which would probably have lain concealed in the gloom of unagitated abſtraction. Accordingly one may remark, that moſt of thoſe wild doctrines, which have been let looſe upon the world, have generally owed their birth to perſons, whoſe circumſtances or diſpoſitions have given them the feweſt opportunities of canvaſſing their reſpective ſyſtems, in the way of free and friendly debate. Had the authors of many an extravagant hypotheſis diſcuſſed their principles in private circles,

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ere they had given vent to them in publick; the obſervation of Varro had never, perhaps, been made, (or never at leaſt with ſo much juſtice) that "there is no "opinion ſo abſurd, but has ſome phi-"loſopher or other to produce in its ſup-"port."

Upon this principle, I imagine, it is, that ſome of the fineſt pieces of antiquity are written in the dialogue-manner. Plato and Tully, it ſhould ſeem, thought truth could never be examined with more advantage, than amidſt the amicable oppoſition of well-regulated converſe. It is probable, indeed, that ſubjects of a ſerious and philoſophical kind were more frequently the topicks of Greek and Roman converſations, than they are of ours; as the circumſtances of the world had not yet given occaſion to thoſe prudential reaſons which may now, perhaps, reſtrain a more free exchange of ſentiments amongſt us. There was ſomething, likewiſe, in the very ſcenes themſelves where they uſually aſſembled, that almoſt unavoidably

avoidably turned the ſtream of their converſations into this uſeful channel. Their rooms and gardens were generally adorned, you know, with the ſtatues of the greateſt maſters of reaſon that had then appeared in the world; and while Socrates or Ariſtotle ſtood in their view, it is no wonder their diſcourſe fell upon thoſe ſubjects, which ſuch animating repreſentations would naturally ſuggeſt. It is probable, therefore, that many of thoſe antient pieces which are drawn up in the dialogue manner, were no imaginary converſations invented by their authors; but faithful tranſcripts from real life. And it is this circumſtance, perhaps, as much as any other, which contributes to give them that remarkable advantage over the generality of modern compoſitions, which have been formed upon the ſame plan. I am ſure, at leaſt, I could ſcarce name more than three or four of this kind which have appeared in our language, worthy of notice. My lord Shafteſbury's dialogue, entitled The moraliſts; Mr Addiſon's upon ancient Coins; Mr Spence's upon

upon the Odyſſey, together with thoſe of my very ingenious friend Philemon to Hydaſpes; are, almoſt, the only productions in this way, which have hitherto come forth among us with advantage. Theſe, indeed, are all maſter-pieces of the kind, and written in the true ſpirit of learning and politeneſs. The converſation in each of theſe moſt elegant performances is conducted, not in the uſual abſurd method of introducing one diſputant to be tamely ſilenced by the other; but in the more lively dramatick manner, where a juſt contraſte of characters is preſerved throughout, and where the ſeveral ſpeakers ſupport their reſpective ſentiments with all the ſtrength and ſpirit of a well-bred oppoſition.

But of all the converſation-pieces, whether antient or modern, either of the moral or polite kind, I know not one which is more elegantly written, than the little anonymous dialogue concerning the riſe and decline of Eloquence among the Romans. I call it anonymous, tho' I

am ſenſible it has been aſcribed, not only to Tacitus and Quinctilian, but even to Suetonius. The reaſons, however, which the criticks have reſpectively produced are ſo exceedingly precarious and inconcluſive, that one muſt have a very extraordinary ſhare of claſſical faith indeed, to receive it as the performance of any of thoſe celebrated writers. It is evidently, however, a compoſition of that period in which they flouriſhed; and, if I were diſpoſed to indulge a conjecture, I ſhould be inclined to give it to the younger Pliny. It exactly coincides with his age; it is addreſſed to one of his particular friends and correſpondents; it is marked with ſome ſimilar expreſſions and ſentiments. But, as arguments of this kind are always more impoſing than ſolid, I recommend it to you as a piece, concerning the author of which, nothing ſatisfactory can be collected. This I may one day or other, perhaps, attempt to prove in form, as I have amuſed myſelf with giving it an Engliſh dreſs. In the mean

time

time I have encloſed my tranſlation in this packet; not only with a view to your ſentiments, but in return to your favour. I was perſuaded I could not make you a better acknowledgment for the pleaſure of that converſation which I lately participated through your means, than by introducing you to one, which (if my copy is not extremely injurious to its original) I am ſure you cannot attend to, without equal entertainment and advantage. Adieu. I am, &c.

A Dialogue[a] concerning

ORATORY.

To FABIUS.

YOU have frequently, my friend, required me to aſſign a reaſon whence it has happened, that the Oratorical character, which ſpread ſuch a glorious luſtre upon former ages, is now ſo totally extinct amongſt us, as ſcarce to preſerve even its name. It is the antients alone, you obſerved, whom we diſtinguiſh with that appellation; while the Eloquent of the preſent times are ſtyled only pleaders, patrons, advocates, or any thing, in ſhort, but orators.

HARDLY, I believe, ſhould I have attempted a ſolution of your difficulty, or ventured upon the examination of a

[a] It is neceſſary to inform thoſe readers of the following dialogue, who may be diſpoſed to compare it with the original, that the edition of Heumannus, printed at Gottingen, 1719, has been generally followed.

queſtion,

queſtion, wherein the genius of the moderns, if they cannot, or their judgment, if they will not riſe to the ſame heights, muſt neceſſarily be given up; had I nothing of greater authority to offer upon the ſubject, than my own particular ſentiments. But having been preſent, in the very early part of my life, at a converſation between ſome perſons of great eloquence, conſidering the age in which they lived, who diſcuſſed this very point; my memory, and not my judgment, will be concerned, whilſt I endeavour, in their own ſtyle and manner, and according to the regular courſe of their debate, to lay before you the ſeveral reaſonings of thoſe celebrated geniuſes. Each of them, indeed, agreeably to the peculiar turn and character of the ſpeaker, alledging different, tho' probable, cauſes of the ſame fact; but all of them ſupporting their reſpective ſentiments with ingenuity and good ſenſe. Nor were the orators of the preſent age without an advocate in this debate: for one of the company took the

oppoſite ſide, and treating the antients with much ſeverity and contempt, declared in favour of modern eloquence.

MARCUS APER and Julius Secundus, two diſtinguiſhed geniuſes of our Forum, made a viſit to Maternus the day after he had publickly recited his tragedy of Cato; a piece, which gave, it ſeems, great offence to thoſe in power, and was much canvaſſed in all converſations. Maternus, indeed, ſeemed throughout that whole performance, to have conſidered only what was ſuitable to the character of his hero, without paying a proper regard to thoſe prudential reſtraints, which were neceſſary for his own ſecurity. I was at that time a warm admirer and conſtant follower of thoſe great men; inſomuch, that I not only attended them when they were engaged in the courts of judicature; but, from my fond attachment to the arts of eloquence, and with a certain ardency peculiar to youth, I joined in all their parties, and was preſent at their moſt private converſations. Their great abilities,

abilities, however, could not ſecure them from the criticks. They alledged, that Secundus had by no means an eaſy elocution; whilſt Aper, they pretended, owed his reputation as an orator, more to nature than to art. It is certain, nevertheleſs, that their objections were without foundation. The ſpeeches of the former were always delivered with ſufficient fluency; and his expreſſion was clear, tho' conciſe: as the latter had, moſt undoubtedly, a general tincture of literature. The truth is, one could not ſo properly ſay, he was *without*, as *above* the aſſiſtance of learning. He imagined, perhaps, the powers and application of his genius would be ſo much the more admired, as it ſhould not appear to derive any of its luſtre from the acquired arts.

We found Maternus, when we entered his apartment, with the tragedy in his hand which he had recited the day before. Are you then (ſaid Secundus, addreſſing himſelf to him) ſo little diſcouraged with the malicious inſinuations of theſe ill-na-

tured cenſurers, as ſtill to cheriſh this obnoxious tragedy of yours? Or, perhaps, you are reviſing it, in order to expunge the exceptionable paſſages; and purpoſe to ſend your Cato into the world, I will not ſay with ſuperior charms, but, at leaſt, with greater ſecurity than in its original form. You may peruſe it (returned he) if you pleaſe; you will find it remains juſt in the ſame ſituation as when you heard it read. I intend, however, that Thyeſtes ſhall ſupply the defects of Cato; for I am meditating a tragedy upon that ſubject, and have already, indeed, formed the plan. I am haſtening, therefore, the publication of this play in my hand, that I may apply myſelf entirely to my new deſign. Are you then, in good earneſt (replied Aper) ſo enamoured of dramatick poetry, as to renounce the buſineſs of oratory in order to conſecrate your whole leiſure to——Medea I think it was before, and now, it ſeems, to Thyeſtes? When the cauſes of ſo many worthy friends, the intereſts of ſo many powerful communities, demand you in the

the Forum: a taſk more than ſufficient to employ your attention, tho' neither Cato nor Domitius had any ſhare of it; tho' you were not continually turning from one dramatick performance to another, and adding the tales of Greece to the hiſtory of Rome.

I SHOULD be concerned, anſwered Maternus, at the ſeverity of your rebuke, if the frequency of our debates upon this ſubject, had not rendered it ſomewhat familiar to me. But how (added he, ſmiling) can you accuſe me of deſerting the buſineſs of my profeſſion, when I am every day engaged in *defending* poetry againſt your accuſations? And I am glad (continued he, looking towards Secundus) that we have now an opportunity of diſcuſſing this point before ſo competent a judge. His deciſion will either determine me to renounce all pretenſions to poetry for the future, or (which I rather hope) will be a ſanction for my quitting that confined ſpecies of oratory, in which, methinks, I have ſufficiently laboured, and authorize

authorize the devoting myſelf to the more enlarged and ſacred eloquence of the Muſes.

GIVE me leave, interpoſed Secundus, before Aper takes exception to his judge, to ſay, what all honeſt ones uſually do in the ſame circumſtances, that I deſire to be excuſed from ſitting in judgment upon a cauſe, wherein I muſt acknowledge myſelf biaſſed in favour of a party concerned: All the world is ſenſible of that ſtrict friendſhip which has long ſubſiſted between me and that excellent man, as well as great poet, Saleius Baſſus. To which let me add, if the Muſes are to be arraigned, I know of none who can offer more prevailing bribes.

I HAVE nothing to alledge againſt Baſſus (returned Aper) or any other man, who not having talents for the bar, chooſes to eſtabliſh a reputation of the poetical kind. Nor ſhall I ſuffer Maternus (for I am willing to join iſſue with him before you) to evade my charge, by drawing others into his

his party. My accuſation is levelled ſingly againſt him; who, formed as he is by nature with a moſt maſculine and truely oratorical genius, chooſes to ſuffer ſo noble a faculty to lie waſte and uncultivated. I muſt remind him, however, that by the exerciſe of this commanding talent, he might at once both acquire and ſupport the moſt important friendſhips, and have the glory to ſee whole provinces and nations rank themſelves under his patronage; a talent, of all others, the moſt advantageous, whether conſidered with reſpect to intereſt, or to honours; a talent, in ſhort, that affords the moſt illuſtrious means of propagating a reputation, not only within our own walls, but throughout the whole compaſs of the Roman empire, and indeed to the moſt diſtant nations of the globe.

If utility ought to be the governing motive of every action and every deſign of our lives; can we poſſibly be employed to better purpoſe, than in the exerciſe of an art, which enables a man, upon all occaſions,

occaſions, to ſupport the intereſt of his friend, to protect the rights of the ſtranger, to defend the cauſe of the injured? that not only renders him the terror of his open and ſecret adverſaries, but ſecures him, as it were, by the moſt firm and permanent guard?

THE particular uſefulneſs, indeed, of this profeſſion, is evidently manifeſted in the opportunities it ſupplies of ſerving others, tho' we ſhould have no occaſion to exert it in our own behalf: but ſhould we, upon any occurrence, be ourſelves attacked, the ſword and buckler is not a more powerful defence in the day of battle, than oratory in the dangerous ſeaſon of publick arraignment. What had Marcellus lately to oppoſe to the united reſentment of the whole ſenate, but his eloquence? Yet, ſupported by that formidable auxiliary, he ſtood firm and unmoved, amidſt all the aſſaults of the artful Helvidius; who, notwithſtanding he was a man of ſenſe and elocution, was totally inexpert in the management of this

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ſort of conteſts. But I need not inſiſt farther on this head; well perſuaded as I am, that Maternus will not controvert ſo clear a truth. Rather let me obſerve, the pleaſure which attends the exerciſe of the perſuaſive arts: a pleaſure, which does not ariſe only once, perhaps, in a whole life; but flows in a perpetual ſeries of gratifications. What can be more agreeable to a liberal and ingenuous mind, formed with a reliſh of rational enjoyments, than to ſee one's levée crouded with a concourſe of the moſt illuſtrious perſonages? not as followers of your intereſt, or your power; not becauſe you are rich and deſtitute of heirs; but ſingly in conſideration of your ſuperior qualifications. It is not unuſual upon theſe occaſions, to obſerve the wealthy, the powerful, and the childleſs, addreſſing themſelves to a young man (and probably no rich one) in favour of themſelves or their friends. Tell me now, has authority or wealth a charm, equal to the ſatisfaction of thus beholding perſons of the higheſt dignity, venerable by their age, or power-

ful by their credit, in the full enjoyment of every external advantage, courting your aſſiſtance, and tacitly acknowledging, that, great and diſtinguiſhed as they are, there is ſomething ſtill wanting to them more valuable than all their poſſeſſions? Repreſent to yourſelf the honourable croud of clients conducting the orator from his houſe, and attending him in his return: think of the glorious appearance he makes in publick, the diſtinguiſhing reſpect that is paid to him in the courts of judicature, the exultation of heart when he riſes up before a full audience, huſhed in ſolemn ſilence and fixed attention, preſſing round the admired ſpeaker, and receiving every paſſion he deems proper to raiſe! Yet theſe are but the ordinary joys of eloquence, and viſible to every common obſerver. There are others, and thoſe far ſuperior, of a more concealed and delicate kind, and of which the orator himſelf can alone be ſenſible. Does he ſtand forth prepared with a ſtudied harangue? As the compoſition, ſo the pleaſure in this inſtance, is more ſolid

and

and equal. If, on the other hand, he riſes in a new and unexpected debate, the previous ſolicitude which he feels upon ſuch occaſions, recommends and improves the pleaſure of his ſucceſs; as indeed the moſt exquiſite ſatisfaction of this kind is, when he boldly hazards the unpremeditated ſpeech. For it is in the productions of genius, as in the fruits of the earth; thoſe which ariſe ſpontaneouſly, are ever the moſt agreeable. If I may venture to mention myſelf, I muſt acknowledge, that neither the ſatisfaction I received when I was firſt inveſted with the laticlave, nor even when I entered upon the ſeveral high poſts in the ſtate; tho' the pleaſure was heightened to me, not only as thoſe honours were new to my family, but as I was born in a city by no means favourable to my pretenſions:—— The warm tranſports, I ſay, which I felt at thoſe times, were far inferior to the joy which has glowed in my breaſt, when I have ſucceſsfully exerted my humble talents in defence of thoſe cauſes and clients committed to my care. To ſay truth, I

imagined

imagined myſelf, at ſuch ſeaſons, to be raiſed above the higheſt dignities, and in the poſſeſſion of ſomething far more valuable, than either the favour of the great, or the bounty of the wealthy can ever beſtow.

Of all the arts or ſciences, there is not one, which crowns its votaries with a reputation in any degree comparable to that of eloquence. It is not only thoſe of a more exalted rank in the ſtate, who are witneſſes of the orator's fame; it is extended to the obſervation even of our very youth, of any hopes or merit. Whoſe example, for inſtance, do parents more frequently recommend to their ſons? Or who are more the gaze and admiration of the people in general? Whilſt every ſtranger that arrives, is curious of ſeeing the man, of whoſe character he has heard ſuch honourable report. I will venture to affirm, that Marcellus, whom I juſt now mentioned, and Vibius (for I chooſe to produce my inſtances from modern times, rather than from thoſe more remote)

mote are as well known in the moſt diſtant corners of the empire, as they are at Capua or Vercellæ, the places, it is ſaid, of their reſpective nativity: an honour, for which they are by no means indebted to their immenſe riches. On the contrary, their wealth may juſtly, it ſhould ſeem, be aſcribed to their eloquence. Every age, indeed, can produce perſons of genius, who by means of this powerful talent, have raiſed themſelves to the moſt exalted ſtation. But the inſtances I juſt now mentioned, are not drawn from diſtant times: they fall within the obſervation of our own eyes. Now the more obſcure the original extraction of thoſe illuſtrious perſons was, the more humble the patrimony to which they were born; ſo much ſtronger proof they afford of the great advantage of the oratorical arts. Accordingly, without the recommendation of family or fortune; without any thing very extraordinary in their virtues (and one of them rather contemptible in his addreſs) they have for many

years maintained the higheſt credit and authority among their fellow citizens. Thus, from being chiefs in the forum, where they preſerved their diſtinguiſhed eminence as long as they thought proper; they have paſſed on to the enjoyment of the ſame high rank in Veſpaſian's favour, whoſe eſteem for them ſeems to be mixed even with a degree of reverence: as indeed they both ſupport and conduct the whole weight of his adminiſtration. That excellent and venerable Prince (whoſe ſingular character it is, that he can endure to hear truth) well knows that the reſt of his favourites are diſtinguiſhed only as they are the objects of his munificence; the ſupplies of which he can eaſily raiſe, and with the ſame facility confer on others. Whereas Criſpus and Marcellus recommended themſelves to his notice, by advantages which no earthly potentate either did, or could, beſtow. The truth of it is, inſcriptions, and ſtatues, and enſigns of dignity could claim but the loweſt rank, amidſt *their* more illuſtrious diſtinctions.

Not

Not that they are unpoſſeſſed of honours of this kind, any more than they are deſtitute of wealth or power: advantages, much oftener affectedly depretiated, than ſincerely deſpiſed.

SUCH, my friends, are the ornaments and ſuch the rewards of an early application to the buſineſs of the forum, and the arts of oratory! But poetry, to which Maternus wiſhes to devote his days (for it was that which gave riſe to our debate) confers neither dignity to her followers in particular, nor advantage to ſociety in general. The whole amount of her pretenſions is nothing more than the tranſient pleaſure of a vain and fruitleſs applauſe. Perhaps what I have already ſaid, and am going to add, may not be very agreeable to my friend Maternus: however, I will venture to aſk him, what avails the eloquence of his Jaſon or Agamemnon? What mortal does it either defend or oblige? Who is it that courts the patronage, or joins the train, of Baſſus, that ingenious (or if you think the term more

honourable, that illuſtrious poet? Eminent as he may be, if his friend, his relation, or himſelf was involved in any litigated tranſactions, he would be under the neceſſity of having recourſe to Secundus, or perhaps to you, my friend[a]. But by no means, however, as you are a poet, and in order to ſollicit you to beſtow ſome verſes upon him: For verſes he can compoſe himſelf, fair, it ſeems, and goodly. —Yet after all, when he has, at the coſt of much time, and many a laboured lucubration, ſpun out a ſingle canto, he is obliged to traverſe the whole town in order to collect an audience. Nor can he procure even this compliment, ſlight as it is, without actually purchaſing it: for the hiring a room, erecting a ſtage and diſperſing his tickets, are articles which muſt neceſſarily be attended with ſome expence. And let us ſuppoſe that his poem is approved: the whole admiration is over in a day or two, like that of a fine flower which dies away without producing any fruit. In a word, it ſecures to him,

[a] Maternus.

neither

neither friend nor patron, nor confers even the moſt inconſiderable favour upon any ſingle creature. The whole amount of his humble gains, is the fleeting pleaſure of a clamorous applauſe! We looked upon it, lately, as an uncommon inſtance of generoſity in Veſpaſian, that he preſented Baſſus with fifty thouſand Seſterces [b]. Honourable, I grant, it is, to poſſeſs a genius which merits the imperial bounty: but how much more glorious (if a man's circumſtances will admit of it) to exhibit in one's own perſon an example of munificence and liberality? Let it be remembered likewiſe, that if you would ſucceed in your poetical labours, and produce any thing of real worth in that art, you muſt retire, as the poets expreſs themſelves,

To ſilent grottoes and ſequeſter'd groves.

That is, you muſt renounce the converſation of your friends, and every civil duty of life, to be concealed in gloomy and unprofitable ſolitude.

[b] About 400l. of our Money.

If we conſider the votaries of this idle art with reſpect to fame, that ſingle recompence which they pretend to derive, or indeed to ſeek, from their ſtudies; we ſhall find, they do not by any means enjoy an equal proportion of it with the ſons of Oratory. For even the beſt poets fall within the notice of but a very ſmall proportion of mankind; whilſt indifferent ones are univerſally diſregarded. Tell me, Maternus, did ever the reputation of the moſt approved rehearſal of the poetical kind, reach the cognizance even of half the Town; much leſs extend itſelf to diſtant provinces? Did ever any foreigner, upon his arrival here, enquire after Baſſus? Or if he did, it was merely as he would after a picture or a ſtatue; juſt to look upon him and paſs on. I would in no ſort be underſtood as diſcouraging the purſuit of poetry in thoſe who have no talents for oratory; if happily they can, by that means, amuſe their leiſure and eſtabliſh a juſt character. I look upon every ſpecies of eloquence as venerable and ſacred; and

prefer

prefer her, in what ever guiſe ſhe may think proper to appear, before any other of her ſiſter-arts: not only, Maternus, when ſhe exhibits herſelf in your choſen favourite, the ſolemn tragedy, or lofty heroic, but even in the pleaſant lyric, the wanton elegy, the ſevere iambick, the witty epigram, or, in one word, in whatever other habit ſhe is pleaſed to aſſume. But (I repeat it again) my complaint is levelled ſingly againſt you; who, deſigned as you are by nature for the moſt exalted rank of eloquence, chooſe to deſert your ſtation, and deviate into a lower order. Had you been endued with the athletick vigour of Nicoſtratus, and born in Greece, where arts of that ſort are eſteemed not unworthy of the moſt refined characters; as I could not patiently have ſuffered that uncommon ſtrength of Arm, formed for the nobler combat, to have idly ſpent itſelf in throwing the javelin, or toſſing the coit: ſo I now call you forth from rehearſals and theatres to the forum, and buſineſs, and high debate; eſpecially ſince you cannot urge the

ſame plea for engaging in poetry which is now generally alledged, that it is leſs liable to give offence than oratory. For the ardency of your genius has already flamed forth, and you have incurred the diſpleaſure of our ſuperiors: not, indeed, for the ſake of a friend; *that* would have been far leſs dangerous; but in ſupport, truly, of *Cato*! Nor can you offer in excuſe, either the duty of your profeſſion, juſtice to your client, or the unguarded heat of debate. You fixed, it ſhould ſeem, upon this illuſtrious and popular ſubject with deliberate deſign, and as a character that would give weight and authority to your ſentiments. You will reply (I am aware) "it was that very circumſtance which "gained you ſuch univerſal applauſe, and "rendered you the general topick of diſ-"courſe." Talk no more then, I beſeech you, of ſecurity and repoſe, whilſt you thus induſtriouſly raiſe up to yourſelf ſo potent an adverſary. For my own part, at leaſt, I am contented with engaging in queſtions of a more modern and private Nature; wherein, if in defence

of

of a friend I am under a neceſſity of taking liberties unacceptable, perhaps, to my ſuperiors, the honeſt freedom of my zeal will, I truſt, not only be excuſed but applauded.

APER having delivered this with his uſual warmth and earneſtneſs; I am prepared (replied Maternus, in a milder tone and with an air of pleaſantry) to draw up a charge againſt the orators, no leſs copious than that of my friend's panegyrick in their behalf. I ſuſpected, indeed, he would turn out of his road, in order to attack the poets; tho' I muſt own at the ſame time, he has ſomewhat ſoftened the ſeverity of his ſatire, by certain conceſſions he is pleaſed to make in their favour. He is willing, I perceive, to allow thoſe, whoſe genius does not point to oratory, to apply themſelves to poetry. Nevertheleſs, I do not ſcruple to acknowledge, that with ſome talents, perhaps, for the forum, I choſe to build my reputation on dramatick poetry. The firſt attempt I made for this purpoſe,

was

was by expoſing the dangerous power of Vatinius: a power which even Nero himſelf diſapproved, and which that infamous favourite abuſed, to the profanation of the ſacred Muſes. And I am perſuaded, if I enjoy any ſhare of fame, it is to poetry rather than to oratory that I am indebted for the acquiſition. It is my fixed purpoſe, therefore, entirely to withdraw myſelf from the fatigue of the bar. I am by no means ambitious of that ſplendid concourſe of clients, which Aper has repreſented in ſuch pompous colours, any more than I am of thoſe ſculptured honours which he mentioned; tho' I muſt confeſs, they have made their way into my family, notwithſtanding my inclinations to the contrary. Innocence is, now at leaſt, a ſurer guard than eloquence; and I am in no apprehenſion, that I ſhall ever have occaſion to open my lips in the ſenate, unleſs, perhaps, in defence of a friend.

Woods and groves and ſolitude, the objects of Aper's invective, afford me, I will own to him, the moſt exquiſite ſatisfaction.

tisfaction. Accordingly, I eſteem it one of the great privileges of poetry, that it is not carried on in the noiſe and tumult of the world, amidſt the painful importunity of anxious ſuitors, and the affecting tears of diſtreſſed criminals. On the contrary, a mind enamoured of the Muſes, retires into ſcenes of innocence and repoſe, and enjoys the ſacred haunts of ſilence and contemplation. Here genuine eloquence received her birth, and *here* ſhe fixed her ſacred and ſequeſtered habitation. 'Twas *here*, in decent and becoming garb, ſhe recommended herſelf to the early notice of mortals, inſpiring the breaſts of the blameleſs and the good: *here* firſt the voice divine of oracles was heard. But *ſhe* of modern growth, offspring of lucre and contention, was born in evil days, and employed (as Aper very juſtly expreſſed it) inſtead of *weapon*: Whilſt happier times, or, in the language of the muſes, the golden age, free alike from orators and from crimes, abounded with inſpired poets, who exerted their noble talents, not in defending the guilty, but in celebrating the

the good. Accordingly no character was ever more eminently diſtinguiſhed or more auguſtly honoured: firſt by the gods themſelves, to whom the poets were ſuppoſed to ſerve as miniſters at their feaſts, and meſſengers of their high beheſts; and afterwards by that ſacred offſpring of the gods, the firſt venerable race of legiſlators. In that glorious liſt we read the names, not of orators indeed, but of Orpheus, and Linus, or, if we are inclined to trace the illuſtrious roll ſtill higher, even of Apollo himſelf.

BUT theſe, perhaps, will be treated by Aper as heroes of Romance. He cannot however deny, that Homer has received as ſignal honours from poſterity, as Demoſthenes; or that the fame of Sophocles or Euripides is as extenſive, as that of Lycias or Hyperides; that Cicero's merit is leſs univerſally confeſſed than Virgil's; or that not one of the compoſitions of Aſinius or Meſſala is in ſo much requeſt, as the Medea of Ovid, or the Thyeſtes of Varius. I will advance

advance even farther, and venture to compare the unenvied fortune and happy ſelf-converſe of the poet, with the anxious and buſy life of the orator; notwithſtanding the hazardous contentions of the latter, may poſſibly raiſe him even to the conſular dignity. Far more deſireable, in my eſtimation, was the calm retreat of Virgil: where yet he lived not unhonoured by his prince, nor unregarded by the world. If the truth of either of theſe aſſertions ſhould be queſtioned, the letters of Auguſtus will witneſs the former; as the latter is evident from the conduct of the whole Roman people, who when ſome verſes of that divine poet were repeated in the theatre, where he happened to be preſent, roſe up to a man and ſaluted him with the ſame reſpect that they would have paid to Auguſtus himſelf. But to mention our own times: I would aſk whether Secundus Pomponius is any thing inferior either in dignity of life, or ſolidity of reputation, to Afer Domitius? As to Criſpus or Marcellus, to whom Aper refers me for an animating example, what

what is there in their preſent exalted fortunes really deſireable? Is it that they paſs their whole lives either in being alarmed for themſelves, or in ſtriking terror into others? Is it that they are daily under a neceſſity of courting the very men they hate? that holding their dignities by unmanly adulation, their maſters never think them ſufficiently ſlaves, nor the people ſufficiently free? And after all, what is this their ſo much envied power? Nothing more, in truth, than what many a paltry freedman has frequently enjoyed. But —"ME let the lovely Muſes lead (as "Virgil ſings) to ſilent groves and hea-"venly-haunted ſtreams, remote from bu-"ſineſs and from care; and ſtill ſuperior "to the painful neceſſity of acting in "wretched oppoſition to my better heart. "Nor let me more, with anxious ſteps "and dangerous, purſue pale Fame amidſt "the noiſy forum! May never clamor-"ous ſuitors, nor panting freed-man "withofficious haſte, awake my peaceful "ſlumbers! Uncertain of futurity, and "equally unconcerned, ne'er may I bribe the

" the favour of the great, by rich be-
" queſts to avarice inſatiate; nor, accu-
" mulation vain! amaſs more wealth than
" I may transfer as inclination prompts,
" whenever ſhall arrive my life's laſt fa-
" tal period: And then, not in horrid
" guiſe of mournful pomp, but crowned
" with chaplets gay, may I be entombed;
" nor let a friend, with unavailing zeal,
" ſollicit the uſeleſs tribute of poſthu-
" mous memorials!"

MATERNUS had ſcarce finiſhed theſe words, which he uttered with great emotion, and with an air of inſpiration, when Meſſalla entered the room; who, obſerving much attention in our countenances, and imagining the converſation turned upon ſomething of more than ordinary import; Perhaps, ſaid he, you are engaged in a *conſultation*, and I doubt I am guilty of an unſeaſonable interruption. By no means, anſwered Secundus; on the contrary, I wiſh you had given us your company ſooner; for, I am perſuaded you would have been extremely entertained. Our friend Aper has, with great eloquence,

eloquence, been exhorting Maternus, to turn the whole ſtrength of his genius and his ſtudies to the buſineſs of the forum: while Maternus, on the other hand, agreeably to the character of one who was pleading the cauſe of the Muſes, has defended his favourite art with a boldneſs and elevation of ſtyle more ſuitable to a poet than an orator.

It would have afforded me infinite pleaſure, replied Meſſalla, to have been preſent at a debate of this kind. And I cannot but expreſs my ſatisfaction, in finding the moſt eminent orators of our times, not confining their geniuſes to points relating to their profeſſion; but canvaſſing ſuch other topicks in their converſation, as give a very advantageous exerciſe to their faculties, at the ſame time that it furniſhes an entertainment, of the moſt inſtructive kind, not only to themſelves, but to thoſe who have the privilege of being joined in their party. And believe me, Secundus, the world received with much approbation your hiſtory of Julius Aſiaticus, as an earneſt that you intend

to

to publiſh more pieces of the ſame nature. On the other ſide (continued he, with an air of irony) it is obſerved, with equal ſatisfaction, that Aper has not yet bid adieu to the queſtions of the ſchools, but employs his leiſure rather after the example of the modern rhetoricians, than of the ancient orators.

I PERCEIVE, returned Aper, that you continue to treat the moderns with your uſual deriſion and contempt; while the antients alone are in full poſſeſſion of your eſteem. It is a maxim, indeed, I have frequently heard you advance (and, allow me to ſay, with much injuſtice to yourſelf and to your brother) that there is no ſuch thing in the preſent age as an orator. This you are the leſs ſcrupulous to maintain, as you imagine it cannot be imputed to a ſpirit of envy; ſince you are willing, at the ſame time, to exclude yourſelf from a character which every body elſe is inclined to give you.

I HAVE hitherto, replied Meſſalla, found no reaſon to change my opinion: and I am perſuaded, that even you yourſelf, Aper, (what ever you may ſometimes affect to the contrary) as well as my other two friends here, join with me in the ſame ſentiments. I ſhould, indeed, be glad, if any of you would diſcuſs this matter, and account for ſo remarkable a diſparity; which I have often endeavoured in my own thoughts. And what to ſome appears a ſatisfactory ſolution of this phænomenon, to me, I confeſs, heightens the difficulty: for I find the very ſame difference prevails among the Grecian orators; and that the prieſt Nicetes, together with others of the Epheſian and Mitylenean ſchools, who humbly content themſelves with raiſing the acclamations of their taſteleſs auditors; deviate much farther from Æſchines or Demoſthenes, than you, my friends, from Tully or Aſinius.

THE queſtion you have ſtarted, ſaid Secundus, is a very important one, and well worthy of conſideration. But who

ſo

ſo capable of doing juſtice to it as yourſelf? who, beſides the advantages of a fine genius and great literature, have given, it ſeems, particular atttention to this enquiry. I am very willing, anſwered Meſſalla, to lay before you my thoughts upon the ſubject, provided you will aſſiſt me with yours as I go along. I will engage for two of us, replied Maternus: Secundus and myſelf will ſpeak to ſuch points as you ſhall, I do not ſay omit, but think proper to leave to us. As for Aper, you juſt now informed us, it is uſual with him to diſſent from you in this article: and, indeed, I ſee he is already preparing to oppoſe us, and will not look with indifrence upon this our aſſociation in ſupport of the antients.

UNDOUBTEDLY, returned Aper, I ſhall not tamely ſuffer the moderns to be condemned, unheard and undefended. But firſt let me aſk, whom it is you call *antients*? What age of orators do you diſtinguiſh by that deſignation? The word always ſuggeſts to me a Neſtor, or an Ulyſſes; men who lived above a thouſand years ſince: whereas you ſeem to

apply it to Demoſthenes and Hyperides, who, it is agreed, flouriſhed ſo late as the times of Philip and Alexander, and, indeed, ſurvived them. It appears from hence, that there is not much above four hundred years diſtance between our age and that of Demoſthenes: a portion of time, which, conſidered with reſpect to human duration, appears, I acknowledge, extremely long; but, if compared with that immenſe æra which the philoſophers talk of, is exceedingly contracted, and ſeems almoſt but of yeſterday. For if it be true, what Cicero obſerves in his treatiſe inſcribed to Hortenſius, that the great and genuine year, is that period in which the heavenly bodies return to the ſame poſition, wherein they were placed when they firſt began their reſpective orbits; and this revolution contains 12,954 of our ſolar years; then Demoſthenes, this antient Demoſthenes of yours, lived in the ſame year, or rather I might ſay, in the ſame month with ourſelves. But to mention the Roman orators: I preſume, you will ſcarcely prefer Menenius Agrip-

pa (who may with ſome propriety, indeed, be called an antient) to the men of eloquence among the moderns. It is Cicero, then, I ſuppoſe, together with Coelius, Cæſar, and Calvus, Brutus, Aſinius, and Meſſalla, to whom you give this honourable precedency: yet I am at a loſs to aſſign a reaſon, why theſe ſhould be deemed antients rather than moderns. To inſtance in Cicero: he was killed, as his freedman Tiro informs us, on the 26th of December, in the conſulſhip of Hirtius and Panſa, in which year Auguſtus and Pedius ſucceeded them in that dignity. Now, if we take fifty-ſix years for the reign of Auguſtus, and add twenty-three for that of Tiberius, about four for that of Caius, fourteen a-piece for Claudius and Nero, one for Galba, Otho, and Vitellius, together with the ſix that our preſent excellent[a] prince has enjoyed the empire,

[a] From this paſſage Fabricius aſſerts, that this dialogue was written in the 6th year of Veſpaſian's reign; but he evidently miſtakes the time in which the ſcene of it is laid, for that in which it was compoſed. It is upon arguments not better founded, that the critics have given Tacitus and Quinctilian the honour of this elegant performance.

Vide Fabric. Bib. Lat. V. I. 559.

we ſhall have about one hundred and twenty years from the death of Cicero to theſe times: a period, to which it is not impoſſible that a man's life may extend. I remember, when I was in Britain, to have met with an old ſoldier, who aſſured me, he had ſerved in the army which oppoſed Cæſar's deſcent upon that iſland. If we ſuppoſe this perſon, by being taken priſoner, or by any other means, to have been brought to Rome, he might have heard Cæſar and Cicero, and likewiſe any of our contemporaries. I appeal to yourſelves, whether at the laſt publick donative, there were not ſeveral of the populace who acknowledged they had received the ſame bounty, more than once, from the hands of Auguſtus? It is evident, therefore, that theſe people might have been preſent at the pleadings both of Corvinus and Aſinius: for Corvinus was alive in the middle of the reign of Auguſtus, and Aſinius towards the latter end. Surely, then, you will not ſplit a century, and call one orator an

antient, and another a modern, when the very ſame perſon might be an auditor of both; and thus, as it were, render them contemporaries.

THE concluſion I mean to draw from this obſervation is, that whatever advantages theſe orators might derive to their characters, from the period of time in which they flouriſhed; the ſame will extend to us: and, indeed, with much more reaſon than to S. Galba, or to C. Carbonius. It cannot be denied, that the compoſitions of theſe laſt are very inelegant and unpoliſhed performances; as I could wiſh, that not only your admired Calvus and Coelius, but, I will venture to add too, even Cicero himſelf (for I ſhall deliver my ſentiments with great freedom) had not conſidered them as the proper models of their imitation. Suffer me to premiſe, however, as I go along, that eloquence changes its qualities as it runs through different ages. Thus as Gracchus, for inſtance, is much more copious and florid than old Cato, ſo Craſſus riſes

into a far higher ſtrain of politeneſs and refinement than Gracchus. Thus likewiſe, as the ſpeeches of Tully are more regular, and marked with ſuperior elegance and ſublimity, than thoſe of the two orators laſt mentioned; ſo Corvinus is conſiderably more ſmooth and harmonious in his periods, as well as more correct in his language than Tully. I am not conſidering, which of them is moſt eloquent. All I endeavour to prove at preſent is, that oratory does not manifeſt itſelf in one uniform figure, but is exhibited by the antients under a variety of different appearances. However, it is by no means a juſt way of reaſoning, to infer that one thing muſt neceſſarily be worſe than another, merely becauſe it is not the ſame. Yet ſuch is the unaccountable perverſity of human nature, that whatever has antiquity to boaſt, is ſure to be admired; as every thing novel is certainly diſapproved. There are criticks, I doubt not, to be found, who prefer even Appius Cœcus to Cato; as it is well known that Cicero had his cenſurers,

who

who objected that his ſtyle was ſwelling and redundant, and by no means agreeable to the elegant conciſeneſs of Attick eloquence. You have certainly read the letters of Calvus and Brutus to Cicero. It appears by thoſe epiſtolary collections, that Cicero conſidered Calvus as a dry, unanimated orator, at the ſame time that he thought the ſtyle of Brutus negligent and unconnected. Theſe, in their turn, had their objections, it ſeems, to Cicero: Calvus condemned his oratorical compoſitions, for being weak and enervated; as Brutus (to uſe his own expreſſion) eſteemed them *feeble* and *disjointed*. If I were to give my opinion, I ſhould ſay, they each ſpoke truth of one another. But I ſhall examine theſe orators ſeparately hereafter: my preſent deſign is only to conſider them in a general view.

THE admirers of antiquity are agreed, I think, in extending the æra of the antients as far as Caſſius Severus; whom they aſſert to have been the firſt that ſtruck out from the plain and ſimple manner,

ner, which till then prevailed. Now I affirm that he did ſo, not from any deficiency in point of genius or learning, but from his ſuperior judgment and good ſenſe. He ſaw it was neceſſary to accommodate oratory, as I obſerved before, to the different times and taſte of the audience. Our anceſtors, indeed, might be contented (and it was a mark of their ignorance and want of politeneſs that they were ſo) with the immoderate and tedious length of ſpeeches, which was in vogue in thoſe ages; as in truth, to be able to harangue for a whole day together was itſelf looked upon, at that illiterate period, as a talent worthy of the higheſt admiration. The immeaſurable introduction, the circumſtantial detail, the endleſs diviſion and ſubdiviſion, the formal argument drawn out into a dull variety of logical deductions, together with a thouſand other impertinencies of the ſame taſteleſs ſtamp, which you may find laid down among the precepts of thoſe drieſt of all writers, Hermagoras and Apollodorus, were then held in ſupreme honour.

honour. And, to complete all, if the orator had juſt dipped into philoſophy, and could ſprinkle his harangue with ſome of the moſt trite maxims of that ſcience, they thundered out his applauſes to the ſkies. For thoſe were new and uncommon topicks to them; as indeed very few of the orators themſelves, had the leaſt acquaintance with the writings either of the philoſophers or the rhetoricians. But in our more enlightened age, where even the loweſt part of an audience have at leaſt ſome general notion of literature, eloquence is conſtrained to find out new and more florid paths. She is obliged to avoid every thing that may fatigue or offend the ears of her audience; eſpecially as ſhe muſt now appear before judges, who decide not by law, but by authority; who preſcribe what limits they think proper to the orator's ſpeech; nor calmly wait till he is pleaſed to come to the point, but call upon him to return, and openly teſtify their impatience whenever he ſeems diſpoſed to wander from the queſtion. Who, I beſeech you, would, in our days,

endure

endure an orator, who ſhould open his harangue with a tedious apology for the weakneſs of his conſtitution? Yet almoſt every oration of Corvinus ſets out in that manner. Would any man *now* have patience to hear out the five long books againſt Verres? or thoſe endleſs volumes of pleadings in favour of Tully, or Cæcina? The vivacity of our modern judges even prevents the ſpeaker; and they are apt to conceive ſome ſort of prejudice againſt all he utters, unleſs he has the addreſs to bribe their attention by the ſtrength and ſpirit of his arguments, the livelineſs of his ſentiments, or the elegance and brilliancy of his deſcriptions. The very populace have ſome notion of the beauty of language, and would no more reliſh the uncoothneſs of antiquity in a modern orator, than they would the geſture of old Roſcius or Ambivius in a modern actor. Our young ſtudents too, who are forming themſelves to eloquence, and for that purpoſe attend the courts of judicature, expect not merely to *hear*, but to carry home ſomething worthy of remembrance:

brance: and it is uſual with them, not only to canvaſs among themſelves, but to tranſmit to their reſpective provinces, whatever ingenious thought or poetical ornament the orator has happily employed. For even the embelliſhments of poetry are now required; and thoſe too, not copied from the heavy and antiquated manner of Attius or Pacuvius, but formed in the lively and elegant ſpirit of Horace, Virgil, and Lucan. Agreeably, therefore, to the ſuperior taſte and judgment of the preſent age, our orators appear with a more poliſhed and graceful aſpect. And moſt certainly it cannot be thought that their ſpeeches are the leſs efficacious, becauſe they ſoothe the ears of the audience with the pleaſing modulation of harmonious periods. Has eloquence loſt her power, becauſe ſhe has improved her charms? Are our temples leſs durable than thoſe of old, becauſe they are not formed of rude materials, but ſhine out in all the poliſh and ſplendor of the moſt coſtly ornaments?

To confeſs the plain truth, the effect which many of the antients have upon me, is to diſpoſe me either to laugh or ſleep. Not to mention the more ordinary race of orators, ſuch as Canutius, Arrius, or Fannius, with ſome others of the ſame dry and unaffecting caſt; even Calvus himſelf ſcarce pleaſes me in more than one or two ſhort orations: though he has left behind him, if I miſtake not, no leſs than one and twenty volumes. And the world in general ſeems to join with me in the ſame opinion of them: for how few are the readers of his invectives againſt Fuſcinius, or Druſus? Whereas thoſe againſt Vatinius are in every body's hands; particularly the ſecond, which is indeed, both in ſentiment and language, a well-written piece. It is evident therefore, that he had an idea of juſt compoſition, and rather wanted genius than inclination, to reach a more graceful and elevated manner. As to the orations of Coelius, though they are by no means valuable upon the whole, yet they have their

merit,

merit, ſo far as they approach to the exalted elegance of the preſent times. Whenever, indeed, his compoſition is careleſs and unconnected, his expreſſion low, and his ſentiments groſs; it is then he is truly an antient: and I will venture to affirm, there is no one ſo fond of antiquity as to admire him in that part of his character. We may allow Cæſar, on account of the great affairs in which he was engaged; as we may Brutus, in conſideration of his philoſophy, to be leſs eloquent than might otherwiſe be expected of ſuch ſuperior geniuſes. The truth is, even their warmeſt admirers acknowledge, that as orators they by no means ſhine with the ſame luſtre, which diſtinguiſhed every other part of their reputation. Cæſar's ſpeech in favour of Decius, and that of Brutus in behalf of king Dejotarus, with ſome others of the ſame coldneſs and languor, have ſcarcely, I imagine, met with any readers; unleſs, perhaps, among ſuch who can reliſh their verſes. For verſes, we know, they writ (and publiſhed too) I will not ſay with more ſpirit, but undoubtedly

doubtedly with more ſucceſs, than Cicero; becauſe they had the good fortune to fall into much fewer hands. Aſinius, one would gueſs, by his air and manner, to have been contemporary with Menenius, and Appius; tho' in fact he lived much nearer to our times. It is viſible he was a cloſe imitator of Attius and Pacuvius, not only in his tragedies, but alſo in his orations; ſo remarkably dry and unpoliſhed are all his compoſitions! But the beauty of eloquence, like that of the human form, conſiſts in the ſmoothneſs, ſtrength, and colour of its ſeveral parts. Corvinus I am inclined to ſpare; tho' it was his own fault that he did not equal the elegant refinements of modern compoſitions; as it muſt be acknowledged that his genius was abundantly ſufficient for that purpoſe.

The next I ſhall take notice of, is Cicero; who had the ſame conteſt with thoſe of his own times, as mine, my friends, with you. They, it ſeems, were favourers of the antients; whilſt He preferred

ferred the eloquence of his contemporaries: and in truth, he excells the orators of his own age in nothing more remarkably, than in the ſolidity of his judgment. He was the firſt who ſet a poliſh upon oratory; who ſeemed to have any notion of delicacy of expreſſion, and the art of compoſition. Accordingly he attempted a more florid ſtyle; as he now and then breaks out into ſome lively flaſhes of wit; particularly in his later performances, when much practice and experience (thoſe beſt and ſureſt guides) had taught him a more improved manner. But his earlier compoſitions are not without the blemiſhes of antiquity. He is tedious in his exordiums, too circumſtantial in his narrations, and careleſs in retrenching luxuriances. He ſeems not eaſily affected, and is but rarely fired; as his periods are ſeldom either properly rounded, or happily pointed: he has nothing, in fine, you would wiſh to make your own. His ſpeeches, like a rude edifice, have ſtrength indeed and permanency; but are deſtitute of that elegance and ſplendor which

are neceſſary to render them perfectly agreeable. The orator, however, in his compoſitions, as the man of wealth in his buildings, ſhould conſider ornament as well as uſe: his ſtructure ſhould be, not only ſubſtantial, but ſtriking; and his furniture not merely convenient, but rich, and ſuch as will bear a cloſe and frequent inſpection; whilſt every thing that has a mean and aukward appearance ought to be totally baniſhed. Let our orator then, reject every expreſſion that is obſolete, and grown ruſty, as it were, by age: let him be careful not to weaken the force of his ſentiments, by a heavy and inartificial combination of words, like our dull compilers of annals: let him avoid all low and inſipid raillery; in a word, let him vary the ſtructure of his periods, nor end every ſentence with the ſame uniform cloſe.

I WILL not expoſe the meanneſs of Cicero's conceits, nor his affectation of concluding almoſt every other period with, *as*

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it ſhould ſeem, inſtead of pointing them with ſome lively and ſpirited turn. I mention even theſe with reluctance, and paſs over many others of the ſame injudicious caſt. It is ſingly, however, in little affectations of this kind, that they who are pleaſed to ſtyle themſelves *ancient orators* ſeem to admire and imitate him. I ſhall content myſelf with deſcribing their characters, without mentioning their names: but you are ſenſible, there are certain pretenders to taſte who prefer Lucilius to Horace, and Lucretius to Virgil; who hold the eloquence of your favourite Baſſus or Nonianus in the utmoſt contempt, when compared with that of Siſenna or Varro; in a word, who deſpiſe the productions of our modern rhetoricians, yet are in raptures with thoſe of Calvus. Theſe curious orators prate in the courts of judicature after the *manner of the ancients*, (as they call it) till they are deſerted by the whole audience, and are ſcarce ſupportable even to their very clients. The truth of it is, that ſoundneſs

of eloquence which they ſo much boaſt, is but an evidence of the natural weakneſs of their genius, as it is the effect alone of tame and cautious art. No phyſician would pronounce a man to enjoy a proper conſtitution, whoſe health proceeded entirely from a ſtudied and abſtemious regimen. To be only not indiſpoſed, is but a ſmall acquiſition; it is ſpirits, vivacity, and vigour that I require: whatever comes ſhort of this, is but one remove from imbecillity.

Be it then, (as with great eaſe it may, and in fact is) the glorious diſtinction of you, my illuſtrious friends, to ennoble our age with the moſt refined eloquence. It is with infinite ſatisfaction, Meſſalla, I obſerve, that you ſingle out the moſt florid among the ancients for your model. And you, my other two ingenious friends[a], ſo happily unite ſtrength of ſentiment with beauty of expreſſion; ſuch a pregnancy of imagination, ſuch a ſymmetry of ordonnance diſtinguiſh your ſpeeches; ſo copi-

[a] Maternus and Secundus.

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ous or ſo conciſe is your elocution, as different occaſions require; ſuch an inimitable gracefulneſs of ſtyle, and ſuch an eaſy flow of wit adorn and dignify your compoſitions; in a word, ſo abſolutely you command the paſſions of your audience, and ſo happily temper your own, that however the envy and malignity of the preſent age may withhold that applauſe which is ſo juſtly your due; poſterity, you may rely upon it, will ſpeak of you in the advantageous terms which you well deſerve.

When Aper had thus finiſhed: It muſt be owned, ſaid Maternus, our friend has ſpoken with much force and ſpirit. What a torrent of learning and eloquence has he poured forth in defence of the moderns! and how completely vanquiſhed the ancients with thoſe very weapons which he borrowed from them! However, (continued he, applying himſelf to Meſſalla) you muſt not recede from your engagement. Not that we expect you ſhould enter into a defence of the antients, or ſuppoſe, (however Aper is pleaſed to compliment)

that any of us can ſtand in competition with them. Aper himſelf does not ſincerely think ſo, I dare ſay; but takes the oppoſite ſide in the debate, merely in imitation of the celebrated manner of antiquity. We do not deſire you, therefore, to entertain us with a panegyrick upon the antients: their well-eſtabliſhed reputation places them far above the want of our encomiums. But what we requeſt of you is, to account for our having ſo widely departed from that noble ſpecies of eloquence which they diſplayed: eſpecially ſince we are not, according to Aper's calculation, more than a hundred and twenty years diſtant from Cicero.

I SHALL endeavour, returned Meſſalla, to purſue the plan you have laid down to me.———I ſhall not enter into the queſtion with Aper, (tho' indeed he is the firſt that ever made it one) whether thoſe who flouriſhed above a century before us, can properly be ſtyled antients. I am not diſpoſed to contend about words: let them be called antients, or anceſtors, or

or whatever other name he pleaſes, ſo it be allowed their oratory was ſuperior to ours. I admit too, what he juſt now advanced, that there are various kinds of eloquence diſcernible in the ſame period; much more in different ages. But as among the Attick orators, Demoſthenes is placed in the firſt rank, then Æſchines, Hyperides next, and after him Lyſias and Lycurgus; an æra, which on all hands is agreed to have been the prime ſeaſon of oratory: ſo amongſt us, Cicero is by univerſal conſent preferred to all his contemporaries; as after him Calvus, Aſinius, Cæſar, Cœlius, and Brutus, are juſtly acknowledged to have excelled all our preceding or ſubſequent orators. Nor is it of any importance to the preſent argument, that they differ in manner, ſince they agree in kind. The compoſitions of Calvus, 'tis confeſſed, are diſtinguiſhed by their remarkable conciſeneſs; as thoſe of Aſinius are by the harmonious flow of his language. Brilliancy of ſentiment is Cæſar's characteriſtick; as poignancy of wit is that of Cœlius. Solidity

recommends the ſpeeches of Brutus; while copiouſneſs, ſtrength, and vehehemence, are the predominant qualities in Cicero. Each of them, however, diſplays an equal ſoundneſs of eloquence; and one may eaſily diſcover a general reſemblance and kindred likeneſs run through their ſeveral works, tho' diverſified, indeed, according to their reſpective geniuſes. That they mutually detracted from each other, (as it muſt be owned there are ſome remaining traces of malignity in their letters) is not to be imputed to them as orators, but as men. No doubt Calvus, Aſinius, and even Cicero himſelf, were liable to be infected with jealouſy, as well as with other human frailties and imperfections. Brutus, however, I will ſingly except, from all imputations of malignity, as I am perſuaded he ſpoke the ſincere and impartial ſentiments of his heart: for can it be ſuppoſed that HE ſhould envy Cicero, who does not ſeem to have envied even Cæſar himſelf? As to Galba, Lælius, and ſome others of the antients, whom Aper has thought proper

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to condemn; I am willing to admit that they have ſome defects, which muſt be aſcribed to a growing and yet immature eloquence.

AFTER all, if we muſt relinquiſh the nobler kind of oratory, and adopt ſome lower ſpecies, I ſhould certainly prefer the impetuoſity of Gracchus, or the incorrectneſs of Craſſus, to the ſtudied foppery of Mæcenas, or the childiſh jingle of Gallio: ſo much rather would I ſee eloquence cloathed in the moſt rude and negligent garb, than decked out with the wanton ornaments of paint and falſe finery! There is ſomething in our preſent manner of elocution, which is ſo far from being oratorical, that it is not even manly; and one would imagine our modern pleaders, by the levity of their wit, the affected ſmoothneſs of their periods and licentiouſneſs of their ſtyle, had a view to the ſtage in all their compoſitions. Accordingly ſome of them are not aſhamed to boaſt (which one can ſcarce even mention without a bluſh) that their

their ſpeeches are adapted to the ſoft modulation of ſtage-muſick. It is this depravity of taſte which has given riſe to the very indecent and prepoſterous, though very frequent expreſſion, that ſuch an orator ſpeaks *ſmoothly*, and ſuch a dancer moves *eloquently*. I am willing to admit therefore, that Caſſius Severus (the ſingle modern whom Aper has thought proper to name) when compared to theſe his degenerate ſucceſſors, may juſtly be deemed an orator; tho' it is certain in the greater part of his compoſitions there appears far more ſtrength than ſpirit. He was the firſt who neglected chaſtity of ſtyle, and propriety of method. Inexpert in the uſe of thoſe very weapons with which he engages, he ever lays himſelf open to a thruſt, by always endeavouring to attack; and one may much more properly ſay of him that he puſhes at random, than that he comports himſelf according to the juſt rules of regular combat. Nevertheleſs, he is greatly ſuperior, as I obſerved before, in the variety of his learning, the agreeableneſs of his wit, and the

the ſtrength of his genius, to thoſe who ſucceeded him: not one of whom, however, has Aper ventured to bring into the field. I imagined, that after having depoſed Aſinius, and Cœlius and Calvus, he would have ſubſtituted another ſet of orators in their place, and that he had numbers to produce in oppoſition to Cicero, to Cæſar, and the reſt whom he rejected; or at leaſt, one rival to each of them. On the contrary, he has diſtinctly and ſeparately cenſured all the antients, while he has ventured to commend the moderns in general only. He thought, perhaps, if he ſingled out ſome, he ſhould draw upon himſelf the reſentment of all the reſt: for every declaimer among them, modeſtly ranks himſelf, in his own fond opinion, before Cicero, tho' indeed after Gabinianus. But what Aper was not hardy enough to undertake, I will be bold to execute for him; and draw out his oratorical heroes in full view, that it may appear by what degrees the ſpirit and vigour of antient eloquence was impaired and broken.

LET me rather intreat you, (ſaid Maternus interrupting him) to enter without any farther preface, upon the difficulty you firſt undertook to clear. That we are inferior to the antients in point of eloquence, I by no means want to have proved; being entirely of that opinion: but my preſent enquiry is how to account for our ſinking ſo far below them? A queſtion, it ſeems, you have examined, and which I am perſuaded you would diſcuſs with much calmneſs, if Aper's unmerciful attack upon your favourite orators had not a little diſcompoſed you. I am nothing offended, returned Meſſalla, with the ſentiments which Aper has advanced; neither ought you, my friends, remembering always that it is an eſtabliſhed law in debates of this kind, that every man may with entire ſecurity diſcloſe his unreſerved opinion. Proceed then, I beſeech you, replied Maternus to the examination of this point concerning the antients, with a freedom equal to theirs: from which I ſuſpect, alas! we have

have more widely degenerated than even from their eloquence.

THE cauſe (ſaid Meſſalla, reſuming his diſcourſe) does not lie very remote; and, tho' you are pleaſed to call upon me to aſſign it, is well known, I doubt not, both to you and to the reſt of this company. For is it not obvious that eloquence, together with the reſt of the politer arts, has fallen from her antient glory, not for want of admirers, but through the diſſoluteneſs of our youth, the negligence of parents, the ignorance of preceptors, and the univerſal diſregard of antient manners? evils, which derived their ſource from Rome, and thence ſpread themſelves through Italy, and over all the provinces; tho' the miſchief, indeed, is moſt obſervable within our own walls. I ſhall take notice, therefore, of thoſe vices to which the youth of this city are more peculiarly expoſed; which riſe upon them in number as they encreaſe in years. But before I enter farther into this ſubject, let me premiſe an obſervation or two concerning the

the judicious method of diſcipline practiſed by our anceſtors, in training up their children.

In the firſt place then, the virtuous matrons of thoſe wiſer ages, did not abandon their infants to the mean hovels of mercenary nurſes, but tenderly reared them up at their own breaſts; eſteeming the careful regulation of their children and domeſtick concerns, as the higheſt point of female merit. It was cuſtomary with them likewiſe to chooſe out ſome elderly female relation, of approved conduct, with whom the family in general entruſted the care of their reſpective children, during their infant years. This venerable perſon ſtrictly regulated, not only their more ſerious purſuits, but even their very amuſements; reſtraining them, by her reſpected preſence, from ſaying or acting any thing contrary to decency and good manners. In this manner, we are informed, Cornelia the mother of the two Gracchi, as

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alſo Aurelia and Attia, to whom Julius and Auguſtus Cæſar owed their reſpective births, undertook this office of family education, and trained up thoſe ſeveral noble youths to whom they were related. This method of diſcipline was attended with one very ſingular advantage: the minds of young men were conducted ſound and untainted to the ſtudy of the noble arts. Accordingly, whatever profeſſion they determined upon, whether that of arms, eloquence, or law, they entirely devoted themſelves to that ſingle purſuit, and with undiſſipated application, poſſeſſed the whole compaſs of their choſen ſcience.

But in the preſent age, the little boy is delegated to the care of ſome paultry Greek chamber-maid, in conjunction with two or three other ſervants, (and even thoſe generally of the worſt kind) who are abſolutely unfit for every rational and ſerious office. From the idle tales and groſs abſurdities of theſe worthleſs people,

people, the tender and uninſtructed mind is ſuffered to receive its earlieſt impreſſions. It cannot, indeed, be ſuppoſed, that any caution ſhould be obſerved among the domeſticks; ſince the parents themſelves are ſo far from training their young families to virtue and modeſty, that they ſet them the firſt examples of luxury and licentiouſneſs. Thus our youth gradually acquire a confirmed habit of impudence, and a total diſregard of that reverence they owe both to themſelves and to others. To ſay truth, it ſeems as if a fondneſs for horſes, actors and gladiators, the peculiar and diſtinguiſhing folly of this our city, was impreſt upon them even in the womb: and when once a paſſion of this contemptible ſort has ſeized and engaged the mind, what opening is there left for the nobler arts?

All converſation in general is infected with topicks of this kind; as they are the conſtant ſubjects of diſcourſe, not only amongſt our youth in their academies, but even of their tutors themſelves. For it

it is not by eſtabliſhing a ſtrict diſcipline, or by giving proofs of their genius, that this order of men gain pupils; it is by the meaneſt compliances and moſt ſervile flattery. Not to mention how ill inſtructed our youth are in the very elements of literature, ſufficient pains is by no means taken in bringing them acquainted with the beſt authors, or in giving them a proper notion of hiſtory, together with a knowledge of men and things. The whole that ſeems to be conſidered in their education, is, to find out a perſon for them called a Rhetorician. I ſhall take occaſion immediately, to give you ſome account of the riſe and progreſs of this profeſſion in Rome, and ſhew you with what contempt it was received by our anceſtors. But it will be neceſſary to lay before you a previous view of that ſcheme of diſcipline which the antient orators practiſed; of whoſe amazing induſtry and unwearied application to every branch of the polite arts, we meet with many remarkable accounts in their own writings.

I NEED not inform you, that Cicero, in the latter end of his treatiſe entitled Brutus, (the former part of which is employed in commemorating the antient orators) gives a ſketch of the ſeveral progreſſive ſteps by which he formed his eloquence. He there acquaints us, that he ſtudied the civil law under Q. Mucius; that he was inſtructed in the ſeveral branches of philoſophy by Philo the academick, and Diodorus the ſtoick; that not ſatisfied with attending the lectures of thoſe eminent maſters, of which there were at that time great numbers in Rome, he made a voyage into Greece and Aſia, in order to enlarge his knowledge, and embrace the whole circle of ſciences. Accordingly he appears by his writings, to have been maſter of logick, ethicks, aſtronomy, and natural philoſophy, beſides being well verſed in geometry, muſick, grammar, and, in ſhort, in every one of the fine arts. For thus it is, my worthy friends; from deep learning and the united confluence of the arts and ſciences, the reſiſtleſs torrent

rent of that amazing eloquence derived its ſtrength and rapidity.

THE faculties of the orator are not exerciſed, indeed, as in other ſciences, within certain preciſe and determinate limits: on the contrary, eloquence is the moſt comprehenſive of the whole circle of arts. Thus He alone can juſtly be deemed an orator, who knows how to employ the moſt perſuaſive arguments upon every queſtion; who can expreſs himſelf ſuitably to the dignity of his ſubject, with all the powers of grace and harmony; in a word, who can penetrate into every minute circumſtance, and manage the whole train of incidents to the greateſt advantage of his cauſe. Such, at leaſt, was the high idea which the antients formed of this illuſtrious character. In order however to attain this eminent qualification, they did not think it neceſſary to declaim in the ſchools, and idly waſte their breath upon feigned or frivolous controverſies. It was

their wiſer method, to apply themſelves to the ſtudy of ſuch uſeful arts as concern life and manners, as treat of moral good and evil, of juſtice and injuſtice, of the decent and the unbecoming in actions. And, indeed, it is upon points of this nature that the buſineſs of the orator principally turns. For example, in the judiciary kind it relates to matters of equity ; as in the deliberative it is employed in determining the fit and the expedient : ſtill however theſe two branches are not ſo abſolutely diſtinct, but that they are frequently blended with each other. Now it is impoſſible, when queſtions of this kind fall under the conſideration of an orator, to enlarge upon them in all the elegant and enlivening ſpirit of an efficacious eloquence, unleſs he is perfectly well acquainted with human nature ; unleſs he underſtands the power and extent of moral duties, and can diſtinguiſh thoſe actions which do not partake either of vice or virtue.

FROM the ſame ſource, likewiſe, he muſt derive his influence over the paſſions. For if he is ſkilled, for inſtance, in the nature of indignation, he will be ſo much the more capable of ſoothing or enflaming the breaſts of his judges: if he knows wherein compaſſion conſiſts, and by what workings of the heart it is moved, he will the more eaſily raiſe that tender affection of the ſoul. An orator trained up in this diſcipline and practiſed in theſe arts, will have full command over the breaſts of his audience, in whatever diſpoſition it may be his chance to find them: and thus furniſhed with all the numberleſs powers of perſuaſion, will judiciouſly vary and accommodate his eloquence, as particular circumſtances and conjunctures ſhall require. There are ſome, we find, who are moſt ſtruck with that manner of elocution, where the arguments are drawn up in a ſhort and cloſe ſtyle: upon ſuch an occaſion the orator will experience the great advantage of being converſant in logick. Others, on the contrary, admire

flowing and diffuſive periods, where the illuſtrations are borrowed from the ordinary and familiar images of common obſervation: here the peripatetick writers will give him ſome aſſiſtance; as indeed they will, in general, ſupply him with many uſeful hints in all the different methods of popular addreſs. The academicks will inſpire him with a becoming warmth: Plato with ſublimity of ſentiments, and Xenophon with an eaſy and elegant diction. Even the exclamatory manner of Epicurus, or Metrodorus, may be found, in ſome circumſtances, not altogether unſerviceable. In a word, what the ſtoicks pretend of their wiſe man, ought to be verified in our orator; and he ſhould actually poſſeſs all human knowledge. Accordingly the antients who applied themſelves to eloquence, not only ſtudied the civil laws, but alſo grammar, poetry, muſick, and geometry. Indeed, there are few cauſes (perhaps I might juſtly ſay there are none) wherein a ſkill in the firſt is not abſolutely neceſſary; as there are many in which an acquain-

acquaintance with the laſt mentioned ſciences are highly requiſite.

If it ſhould be objected, that "elo-"quence is the ſingle ſcience requiſite for "the orator; as an occaſional recourſe to "the others will be ſufficient for all his "purpoſes:" I anſwer; in the firſt place, there will always be a remarkable difference in the manner of applying what we take up, as it were, upon loan, and what we properly poſſeſs; ſo that it will ever be manifeſt, whether the orator is indebted to others for what he produces, or derives it from his own unborrowed fund. And in the next, the ſciences throw an inexpreſſible grace over our compoſitions, even where they are not immediately concerned; as their effects are diſcernible where we leaſt expect to find them. This powerful charm is not only diſtinguiſhed by the learned and the judicious, but ſtrikes even the moſt common and popular claſs of auditors; inſomuch that one may frequently hear them applauding a ſpeaker of this improved kind, as a man

of genuine erudition; as enriched with the whole treaſures of eloquence, and, in one word, acknowledge the compleat orator. But I will take the liberty to affirm, that no man ever did, nor indeed ever can, maintain that exalted character, unleſs he enters the forum ſupported by the full ſtrength of the united arts. Accompliſhments, however, of this ſort are now ſo totally neglected, that the pleadings of our orators are debaſed by the loweſt expreſſions; as a general ignorance both of the laws of our country and the acts of the ſenate, is viſible throughout their performances. All knowledge of the rights and cuſtoms of Rome is profeſſedly ridiculed, and philoſophy ſeems at preſent to be conſidered as ſomething that ought to be ſhunned and dreaded. Thus eloquence, like a dethroned potentate, is baniſhed her rightful dominions, and confined to barren points and low conceit: and ſhe who was once miſtreſs of the whole circle of ſciences, and charmed every beholder with the goodly appearance of her glorious train, is now ſtripped of

all her attendants (I had almoſt ſaid of all her genius) and ſeems as one of the meaneſt of the mechanick arts. This therefore I conſider as the firſt, and the principal reaſon of our having ſo greatly declined from the ſpirit of the antients.

If I were called upon to ſupport my opinion by authorities, might I not juſtly name, among the Grecians, Demoſthenes? who, we are informed, conſtantly attended the lectures of Plato: as among our own countrymen, Cicero himſelf aſſures us, (and in theſe very words, if I rightly remember) that he owed whatever advances he had made in eloquence, not to the rhetoricians, but to the academick philoſophers.

Other, and very conſiderable, reaſons might be produced for the decay of eloquence. But I leave them, my friends, as it is proper I ſhould, to be mentioned by you; having performed my ſhare in the examination of this queſtion: and with a freedom, which will give, I imagine,

gine, as uſual, much offence. I am ſure, at leaſt, if certain of our contemporaries were to be informed of what I have here maintained, I ſhould be told, that in laying it down as a maxim, that a knowledge both of law and philoſophy are eſſential qualifications in an orator, I have been fondly purſuing a phantom of my own imagination.

I AM ſo far from thinking, replied Maternus, you have compleated the part you undertook, that I ſhould rather imagine you had only given us the firſt general ſketch of your deſign. You have marked out to us indeed, thoſe ſciences wherein the antient orators were inſtructed, and have placed in ſtrong contraſte their ſucceſsful induſtry, with our unperforming ignorance. But ſomething farther ſtill remains: and as you have ſhewn us the ſuperior acquirements of the orators in thoſe more improved ages of eloquence, as well as the remarkable deficiency of thoſe in our own times; I ſhould be glad you would proceed to acquaint us with the particular

particular exerciſes by which the youth of thoſe earlier days were wont to ſtrengthen and improve their geniuſes. For I dare ſay you will not deny, that oratory is acquired by practiſe far better than by precept. And our other two friends here, ſeem willing, I perceive, to admit it.

To which, when Aper and Secundus had ſignified their aſſent, Meſſalla, reſuming his diſcourſe, continued as follows:

HAVING then, as it ſhould ſeem, diſcloſed to your ſatisfaction the ſeeds and firſt principles of antient eloquence, by ſpecifying the ſeveral kinds of arts to which the antient orators were trained; I ſhall now lay before you the method they purſued, in order to gain a facility in the exertion of eloquence. This indeed I have in ſome meaſure anticipated, by mentioning the preparatory arts to which they applyed themſelves: for it is impoſſible to make any progreſs in a compaſs ſo various and ſo abſtruſe, unleſs we not only ſtrengthen our knowledge by reflection, but improve a general aptitude by frequent exerciſe.

exerciſe. Thus it appears that the ſame ſteps muſt be purſued in exerting our oratory, as in attaining it. But if this truth ſhould not be univerſally admitted; if any ſhould think, that eloquence may be poſſeſſed without paying previous court to her attendant ſciences; moſt certainly, at leaſt, it will not be denied, that a mind duly impregnated with the polite arts, will enter with ſo much the more advantage upon thoſe exerciſes peculiar to the oratorical circus.

ACCORDINGLY, our anceſtors when they deſigned a young man for the profeſſion of eloquence, having previouſly taken due care of his domeſtick education, and ſeaſoned his mind with uſeful knowledge, introduced him to the moſt eminent orator in Rome. From that time the youth commenced his conſtant follower, attending him upon all occaſions, whether he appeared in the publick aſſemblies of the people, or in the courts of civil judicature. Thus he learned, if I may uſe the expreſſion, the arts of oratorical conflict

flict in the very field of battle. The advantages which flowed from this method were conſiderable: it animated the courage and quickened the judgment of youth, thus to receive their inſtructions in the eye of the world, and in the midſt of affairs; where no man could advance an abſurd or a weak argument without being rejected by the bench, expoſed by his adverſary, and, in a word, deſpiſed by the whole audience. By this method they imbibed the pure and uncorrupted ſtreams of genuine eloquence. But though they chiefly attached themſelves to one particular orator, they heard likewiſe all the reſt of their contemporary pleaders, in many of their reſpective debates. Hence alſo they had an opportunity of acquainting themſelves with the various ſentiments of the people, and of obſerving what pleaſed or diſguſted them moſt in the ſeveral orators of the Forum. By this means they were ſupplied with an inſtructor of the beſt and moſt improving kind, exhibiting, not the feigned ſemblance of eloquence, but her real and lively

lively manifeſtation; not a pretended, but a genuine adverſary, armed in earneſt for the combat; an audience ever full and ever new, compoſed of foes as well as friends, and where not a ſingle expreſſion could fall uncenſured, or unapplauded. For you will agree with me, I am well perſuaded, when I aſſert, that a ſolid and laſting reputation of eloquence muſt be acquired by the cenſure of our enemies, as well as by the applauſe of our friends; or rather, indeed, it is from the former that it derives its ſureſt and moſt unqueſtioned ſtrength and firmneſs. Accordingly, a youth thus formed to the bar, a frequent and attentive hearer of the moſt illuſtrious orators and debates, inſtructed by the experience of others, acquainted with the popular taſte, and daily converſant in the laws of his country; to whom the ſolemn preſence of the judges, and the awfull eyes of a full audience were familiar, roſe at once into affairs, and was equal to every cauſe. Hence it was that Craſſus at the age of nineteen, Cæſar at twenty one, Pollio at

twenty

twenty two, and Calvus when he was but a few years older, pronounced thoſe ſeveral ſpeeches againſt Carbo, Dolabella, Cato, and Vatinius, which we read to this hour with admiration.

On the other hand, our modern youth receive their education under certain declaimers called Rhetoricians: a ſet of men who made their firſt appearance in *Rome*, a little before the time of Cicero. And that they were by no means approved by our anceſtors, plainly appears from their being enjoined, under the cenſorſhip of Craſſus and Domitius, to ſhut up their ſchools of *impudence*, as Cicero expreſſes it. — But I was going to ſay, we are ſent to certain academies, where it is hard to determine whether the place, the company, or the method of inſtruction is moſt likely to infect the minds of young people, and produce a wrong turn of thought. For nothing, certainly, can there be of an affecting ſolemnity in an audience, where all who compoſe it are of the ſame low degree of underſtanding; nor

nor any advantage to be received from their fellow-ſtudents, where a parcel of boys and raw youths of unripe judgments harangue before each other, without the leaſt fear or danger of criticiſm. And as for their exerciſes, they are ridiculous in their very nature. They conſiſt of two kinds, and are either declamatory or controverſial. The firſt, as being eaſier and requiring leſs ſkill, is aſſigned to the younger lads: the other is the taſk of more mature years. But, good gods! with what incredible abſurdity are they compoſed! The truth is, the ſtyle of their declamations is as falſe and contemptible, as the ſubjects are uſeleſs and fictitious. Thus, being taught to harangue in a moſt pompous diction, on the rewards due to tyrannicides, on the election to be made by deflowred virgins[a], on the licentiouſneſs of married women, on the ceremonies to be obſerved in times of peſtilence,

[a] It was one of the queſtions uſually debated in theſe rhetorick-ſchools, whether the party who had been raviſhed ſhould chuſe to marry the violator of her chaſtity, or rather have him put to death.

with

with other topicks of the ſame unconcerning kind, which are daily debated in the ſchools, and ſcarce ever at the bar; "they "appear abſolute novices in the affairs "of the world, and are by much too ele-"vated for common life."

"[a] Here Meſſalla pauſed: when Se-"cundus, taking his turn in the con-"verſation, began with obſerving, that" the true and lofty ſpirit of genuine elo-

[a] The latter part of Meſſalla's diſcourſe together with what immediately followed it in the original, is loſt: The chaſm, however, does not ſeem to be ſo great as ſome of the commentators ſuſpect. The tranſlator therefore has ventured to fill it up in his own way, with thoſe lines which are diſtinguiſhed by inverted comma's. He has likewiſe given the next ſubſequent part of the converſation, to Secundus; tho' it does not appear in the original to whom it belongs. It would be of no great importance to the Engliſh reader, to juſtify our tranſlator in this laſt article: tho', perhaps, it would not be very difficult, if it were neceſſary.

To ſave the reader the trouble of turning to a ſecond note upon a like occaſion, it is proper to obſerve in this place, that he will find the ſame inverted comma's in page 331, 2. The words included between them, are alſo an addition of the tranſlator's: and for the ſame reaſon as that juſt now mentioned.

quence, like that of a clear and vigorous flame, is nouriſhed by proper fuel, excited by agitation, and ſtill brightens as it burns. It was in this manner, "ſaid he," that the oratory of our anceſtors was kindled and ſpread itſelf. The moderns have as much merit of this kind, perhaps, as can be acquired under a ſettled and peaceable government: but far inferior, no doubt, to that which ſhone out in the times of licentiouſneſs and confuſion, when He was deemed the ableſt orator, who had moſt influence over a reſtleſs and ungoverned multitude. To this ſituation of publick affairs was owing thoſe continual debates concerning the Agrarian laws, and the popularity conſequent thereupon; thoſe long harangues of the magiſtrates, thoſe impeachments of the great, thoſe factions of the nobles, thoſe hereditary enmities in particular families, and in fine, thoſe inceſſant ſtruggles between the ſenate and the commons; which, though each of them prejudicial to the ſtate, yet moſt certainly contributed to produce and encourage that rich vein

of eloquence which diſcovered itſelf in thoſe tempeſtuous days. The way to dignities lay directly through the paths of eloquence. The more a man ſignalized himſelf by his abilities in this art, ſo much the more eaſily he opened his road to preferment and maintained an aſcendant over his collegues, at the ſame time that it heightened his intereſt with the nobles, his authority with the ſenate, and his reputation with the people in general. The patronage of theſe admired orators was courted even by foreign nations; as the ſeveral magiſtrates of our own, endeavoured to recommend themſelves to their favour and protection, by ſhewing them the higheſt marks of honour whenever they ſet out for the adminiſtration of their reſpective provinces, and by ſtudiouſly cultivating a friendſhip with them at their return. They were called upon, without any ſolicitation on their own part, to fill up the ſupreme dignities of the ſtate. Nor were they even in a private ſtation without great power, as by means of the perſuaſive arts they had a very conſiderable influence over both the ſenate

and the people. The truth is, it was an eſtabliſhed maxim in thoſe days, that without the oratorical talents, no man could either acquire or maintain any high poſt in the government. And no wonder indeed, that ſuch a notion ſhould univerſally prevail: ſince it was impoſſible for any perſon endued with this commanding art, to paſs his life in obſcurity, how much ſoever it might be agreeable to his own inclinations; ſince it was not ſufficient merely to vote in the ſenate, without ſupporting that vote with good ſenſe and eloquence; ſince in all publick impeachments or civil cauſes, the accuſed was obliged to anſwer to the charge in his own perſon; ſince written depoſitions were not admitted in judicial matters, but the witneſſes were called upon to deliver their evidence in open court. Thus our anceſtors were eloquent, as much by neceſſity as by encouragements. To be poſſeſſed of the perſuaſive talents, was eſteemed the higheſt glory; as the contrary character was held in the utmoſt contempt. In a word, they were incited to the purſuit of oratory, by a prin-

a principle of honour as well as by a view of intereſt. They dreaded the diſgrace of being conſidered rather as clients than patrons; of loſing thoſe dependants which their anceſtors had tranſmitted to them, and ſeeing them mix in the train of others: in ſhort, of being looked upon as men of mean abilities, and conſequently either paſſed over in the diſpoſal of high offices, or deſpiſed in the adminiſtration of them.

I KNOW not whether thoſe antient hiſtorical pieces, which were lately collected and publiſhed by Mucianus from the old libraries where they have hitherto been perſerved, have yet fallen into your hands. This collection conſiſts of eleven volumes of the publick journals, and three of epiſtles; by which it appears that Pompey and Craſſus gained as much advantage from their eloquence as their arms: that Lucullus, Metellus, Lentulus, Curio, and the reſt of thoſe diſtinguiſhed chiefs, devoted themſelves with great application to this inſinuating art: in a word, that not a ſingle perſon in thoſe times roſe to any conſiderable

ſiderable degree of power, without the aſſiſtance of the rhetorical talents.

To theſe conſiderations may be farther added, that the dignity and importance of the debates in which the ancients were engaged, contributed greatly to advance their eloquence. Moſt certain, indeed, it is, that an orator muſt neceſſarily find great difference with reſpect to his powers, when he is to harangue only upon ſome trifling robbery, or a little paultry form of pleading; and when the faculties of his mind are warmed and enlivened by ſuch intereſting and animating topicks as bribery at elections, as the oppreſſion of our allies, or the maſſacre of our fellow-citizens. Evils theſe, which, beyond all peradventure, it were better ſhould never happen; and we have reaſon to rejoice that we live under a government where we are ſtrangers to ſuch terrible calamities; ſtill it muſt be acknowledged, that wherever they did happen, they were wonderful incentives to eloquence. For the orator's genius riſes and expands itſelf

in proportion to the dignity of the occaſion upon which it is exerted; and I will lay it down as a maxim, that it is impoſſible to ſhine out in all the powerful luſtre of genuine eloquence, without being inflamed by a ſuitable importance of ſubject. Thus the ſpeech of Demoſthenes againſt his guardians, ſcarcely, I imagine, eſtabliſhed his character; as it was not the defence of Archias, or Quinctius, that acquired Cicero the reputation of a conſummate orator. It was Catiline, and Milo, and Verres, and Mark Anthony, that warmed him with that noble glow of eloquence, which gave the finiſhing brightneſs to his unequalled fame. Far am I from inſinuating, that ſuch infamous characters deſerve to be tolerated in a ſtate, in order to ſupply convenient matter of oratory: all I contend for is, that this art flouriſhes to moſt advantage in turbulent times. Peace, no doubt, is infinitely preferable to war; but it is the latter only that forms the ſoldier. It is juſt the ſame with eloquence: the oftener ſhe enters, if I may ſo ſay, the field of battle; the more wounds ſhe

gives

gives and receives; the more powerful the adverſary with which ſhe contends; ſo much the more ennobled ſhe appears in the eye of mankind. For it is the diſpoſition of human nature, always to admire what we ſee is attended with danger and difficulty in others, how much ſoever we may chooſe eaſe and ſecurity for ourſelves.

ANOTHER advantage which the antient orators had over the moderns, is, that they were not confined in their pleadings, as we are, to a few hours. On the contrary, they were at liberty to adjourn as often as they thought proper; they were unlimited as to the number of days or of counſel, and every orator might extend his ſpeech to the length moſt agreeable to himſelf. Pompey, in his third conſulſhip, was the firſt who curbed the ſpirit of eloquence: ſtill however permitting all cauſes to be heard, agreeably to the laws, in the forum and before the Prætors. How much more conſiderable the buſineſs of thoſe magiſtrates was, than

that

that of the centumvirs, who at preſent determine all cauſes, is evident from this circumſtance, that not a ſingle oration of Cicero, Cæſar, or Brutus, or in ſhort of any one celebrated orator, was ſpoken before theſe laſt, excepting only thoſe of Pollio in favour of the heirs of Urbinia. But then it muſt be remember'd, that theſe were delivered about the middle of the reign of Auguſtus, when a long and uninterrupted peace abroad, a perfect tranquillity at home, together with the general good conduct of that wiſe prince, had damped the flames of eloquence as well as thoſe of ſedition.

You will ſmile, perhaps, at what I am going to ſay, and I mention it for that purpoſe: but is there not ſomething in the preſent confined garb of our orators, that has an ill effect even upon their elocution, and makes it appear low and contemptible? May we not ſuppoſe likewiſe, that much of the ſpirit of oratory is ſunk, by that cloſe and deſpicable ſcene wherein many of our cauſes are now debated? For the orator, like a generous

ſteed,

ſteed, requires a free and open ſpace wherein to expatiate; otherwiſe the force of his powers is broken, and half the energy of his talents is checked in their career. There is another circumſtance alſo exceedingly prejudicial to the intereſt of eloquence, as it prevents a due attention to ſtyle: we are now obliged to enter upon our ſpeech whenever the judge calls upon us; not to mention the frequent interruptions which ariſe by the examination of witneſſes. Beſides, the courts of judicature are at preſent ſo unfrequented, that the orator ſeems to ſtand alone, and talk to bare walls. But eloquence rejoices in the clamour of loud applauſe, and exults in a full audience, ſuch as uſed to preſs round the ancient orators when the forum ſtood thronged with nobles; when a numerous retinue of clients, when foreign ambaſſadors, and whole cities aſſiſted at the debate; and when even Rome herſelf was concerned in the event. The very appearance of that prodigious concourſe of people, which attended the trials of Beſtia, Cornelius, Scaurus, Milo,

and

and Vatinius, muſt have enflamed the breaſt of the coldeſt orator. Accordingly we find, that of all the antient orations now extant, there are none which have more eminently diſtinguiſhed their authors, than thoſe which were pronounced under ſuch favourable circumſtances. To theſe advantages we may farther add likewiſe, the frequent general aſſemblies of the people, the privilege of arraigning the moſt conſiderable perſonages, and the popularity of ſuch impeachments; when the ſons of oratory ſpared not even Scipio, Sylla, or Pompey; and when, in conſequence of ſuch acceptable attacks upon ſuſpected power, they were ſure of being heard by the people with the utmoſt attention and regard. How muſt theſe united cauſes contribute to raiſe the genius, and inſpire the eloquence of the antients!

"MATERNUS, who, you will re-
"member, was in the midſt of his ha-
"rangue in favour of poetry when Meſ-
"ſalla firſt entered into the room, finding

"Secundus

" Secundus was now ſilent, took that " opportunity of reſuming his invective " againſt the exerciſe of the oratorical " arts in general." That ſpecies of eloquence, ſaid he, wherein poetry is concerned, is calm and peaceable, moderate and virtuous: whereas that other ſupreme kind, which my two friends here have been deſcribing, is the offspring of licentiouſneſs (by fools miſcalled liberty) and the companion of ſedition; bold, obſtinate and haughty, unknowing how to yield or how to obey, an encourager of a lawleſs populace, and a ſtranger in all well-regulated communities. Who ever heard of an orator in Lacedæmon or Crete? cities which exerciſed the ſevereſt diſcipline, and were governed by the ſtricteſt laws. We have no account of Perſian or Macedonian eloquence, or indeed of that of any other ſtate which ſubmitted to a regular adminiſtration of government. Whereas Rhodes and Athens (places of popular rule, where all things lay open to all men) ſwarmed with orators innumerable. In the ſame manner, Rome, while

while ſhe was under no ſettled policy; while ſhe was torn with parties, diſſentions, and factions; while there was no peace in the forum, no harmony in the ſenate, no moderation in the judges; while there was neither reverence paid to ſuperiors, nor bounds preſcribed to magiſtrates——Rome, under theſe circumſtances, produced, beyond all diſpute, a ſtronger and brighter vein of eloquence; as ſome valuable plants will flouriſh even in the wildeſt ſoil. But the tongue of the Gracchi, did nothing compenſate the republick for their ſeditious laws; nor the ſuperior eloquence of Cicero, make him any amends for his ſad cataſtrophe.

THE truth is, the forum (that ſingle remain which now ſurvives of antient oratory) is, even in its preſent ſituation, an evident proof that all things amongſt us are not conducted in that well-ordered manner one could wiſh. For, tell me, is it not the guilty or the miſerable alone, that fly to us for aſſiſtance? When any community implores our protection,

tection, is it not becauſe it either is inſulted by ſome neighbouring ſtate, or torn by domeſtick feuds? And what province ever ſeeks our patronage, 'till ſhe has been plunder'd or oppreſſed? But far better it ſurely is, never to have been injured, than at laſt to be redreſſed. If there was a government in the world free from commotions and diſturbances, the profeſſion of oratory would there be as uſeleſs, as that of medicine to the ſound: and as the phyſician would have little practice or profit among the healthy and the ſtrong, ſo neither would the orator have much buſineſs or honour where obedience and good manners univerſally prevail. To what purpoſe are ſtudied ſpeeches in a ſenate, where the better and the major part of the aſſembly are already of one mind? What the expediency of haranguing the populace, where publick affairs are not determined by the voice of an ignorant and giddy multitude, but by the ſteddy wiſdom of a ſingle perſon? To what end voluntary informations, where crimes are unfrequent and inconſiderable? or of laboured

boured and invidious defences, where the clemency of the judge is ever on the ſide of the accuſed? Believe me then, my worthy (and, as far as the circumſtances of the age require, my eloquent) friends, had the gods reverſed the date of your exiſtence, and placed *You* in the times of thoſe antients we ſo much admire, and *Them* in yours; *You* would not have fallen ſhort of that glorious ſpirit which diſtinguiſhed their oratory, nor would *they* have been deſtitute of a proper temperature and moderation. But ſince a high reputation for eloquence is not conſiſtent with great repoſe in the publick; let every age enjoy its own peculiar advantages, without derogating from thoſe of a former.

MATERNUS having ended; Meſſalla obſerved, that there were ſome points which his friend had laid down, that were not perfectly agreeable to his ſentiments; as there were others, which he wiſhed to hear explained more at large: but the time is now, ſaid he, too far advanced. If I have maintained any thing, replied Maternus,

ternus, which requires to be opened more explicitly, I ſhall be ready to clear it up in ſome future conference: at the ſame time riſing from his ſeat and embracing Aper; Meſſalla and I (continued he ſmiling) ſhall arraign you, be well aſſured, before the poets and the admirers of the antients. And I both of you (returned Aper) before the rhetoricians. Thus we parted in mutual good humour.

MUSEUM BRITANNICUM

FINIS.